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INTERESTING FACTS
of the
RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

or

In the Flame of Russia's Revolution
with God and the Bible

by

REV. N. I. SALOFF-ASTAKHOFF

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1931

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CLAYSON

DEDICATION



HIS book is dedicated to my helpmate and co-worker in the vineyard of the Lord, (my dear wife Katherine—nee Enns) who together with me endured all the hardships (with a few exceptions) and shared the Lord's blessings recorded in this book.

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FOREWORD

SEVERAL years ago I attempted to write down some of my experiences during our evangelistic work in Russia, but bringing them to remembrance in horrible detail was at that time too much for my broken health, so that I was compelled to postpone the work for fully four years.

Having now recovered from the result of those years of hardship and suffering, I have decided (God willing) to finish and publish this work, still realizing that I have neither the strength nor the ability to make a pen picture of all that we experienced, for even the most vivid coloring would be too faint, and our language, at best, too inadequate to express the keen realities.

Looking back, the past now seems like a horrible dream, mingled with the beautiful soft lights of God's blessings which hallows the picture. From the natural viewpoint it seems almost impossible for anyone to endure so much inhuman treatment, and unspeakable hardships, and still be alive! But, we hear the voice of our dear Lord and Saviour saying: "Not a hair from your head shall fall without the will of my Father, Who is in heaven."

Not half of our experiences are recorded in this book; but I send it forth with a fervent prayer that it will fulfill God's purpose, and bring a rich blessing to its readers.

THE AUTHOR

I

J. J. DYCK OF HALBSTADT

AFTER getting settled in America my thoughts travelled across the broad Atlantic, past the vineyards of France, beyond the majesty of the Alps and the picturesque beauty of the Rhine valley, over the flat marshes of Poland to that far off land of Russia, my native land.

Visualizing afresh those dread years from 1917 to 1926 one sees woes unparalleled in modern history.

Fast on the fringes of the World War, like the eruption of a huge volcano, the Revolution burst in lurid horror over the land, shattering the carefully built structure of civilization with its law, order and comparative safety.

From the orchards of Crimea to the cold Arctic sea the black cloud hung, under which stalked the grim specters of famine and pestilence.

Face to face with death stood Russia's millions without any visible means of escape. But God, whose "throne is in heaven" and whose "footstool" is "the earth," who counts "the isles as a very little thing," yet who says of the sparrow, "Not one of them is forgotten before God", was again "a very present help in trouble," launching His staunch life-boat (even the Tent Mission) on the storm tossed sea.

This Mission was organized by Jacob J. Dyck of Halbstadt, a City in the fertile province of Tawrien. Young, zealous, and a firm believer in God, he fearlessly proclaimed salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, even to his fellow students while he was getting his training in Germany.

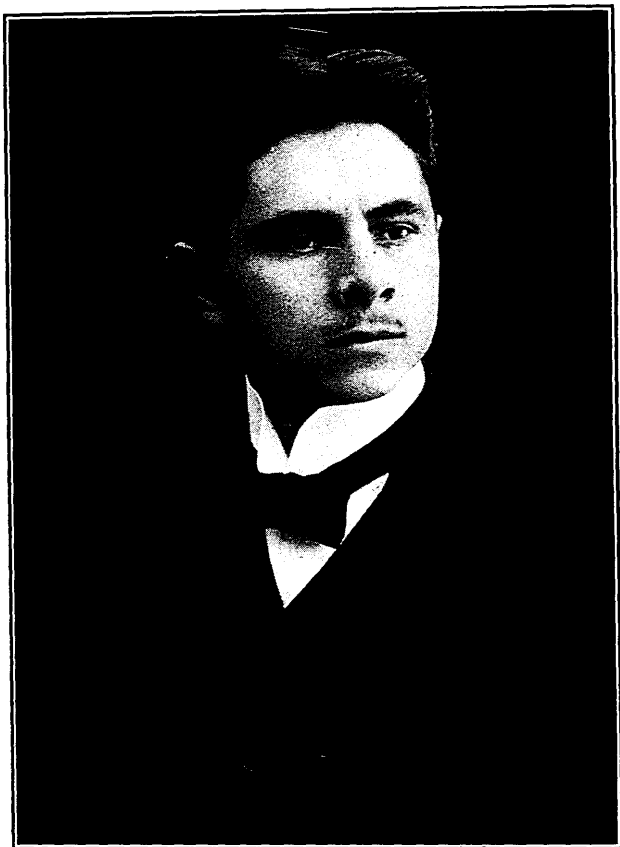
Shortly before the outbreak of the World War Jacob Dyck returned to Russia, purposing to apply his knowledge, develop industry and thus aid the people; but Providence ruled differently.

In 1914, when Europe was plunged into the whirlwind of war; when millions were torn from their peaceful homes to augment the ranks of the army, Jacob J. Dyck was conscripted. As a true disciple of Christ he felt that he could not conscientiously kill his fellowmen; thus the timely intervention of Providence released him from bearing arms and stationed him in an office of the Red Cross at Moscow.

Day after day, as the tragedy of war developed, Mr. Dyck came in contact with hundreds of people, and he realized that besides the obligation of faithfully attending to the duties of his office, God had called him to testify of Him, and to lead these multitudes (many of whom lived in sin and were far away from God) to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this work Jacob Dyck gave himself heart and soul, and many a storm tossed soul was anchored to the "Rock of Ages" and found "The peace which passeth understanding."—

This young man's fine enthusiasm and strong influence so reacted upon his fellow workers that



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many followed his example; confessing that their faith (which hitherto had been faint and wavering) was mightily strengthened by his dauntless courage, so that now to lead souls to Christ was also the dominating purpose of their lives. Before, they had been like a ship without a rudder; but in Jacob Dyck they found a friend and leader whom they rejoiced to help shed forth the light of Christianity; which grew (like the tiny mustard seed) until its life giving rays were seen in many places. But as light is opposed to darkness, warmth to coldness and goodness to wickedness, so in this instance came the realization that the adversary was vigorously at work creating coolness, bitter enmity and virulent hostility in another faction, resulting in false accusations, with the purpose of wresting Mr. Dyck from his position and having him transferred to another place.

Especially hostile was his superior officer, doing all in his power to hinder the spreading of the truth; which was the more surprising seeing that before he had himself been almost persuaded (like Agrippa of old) "to be a Christian."

Mr Dyck's subordinates, fearing to lose their spiritual leader, earnestly prayed that the God of all power, able to guide and protect, would speedily deliver His true servant from the subtle machinations of his powerful and influential enemies.

Many Christian people, who breathlessly watched the opposing forces (on the one side false accusations, on the other fervent prayers) observed that Jacob Dyck (always above re-

proach) went on faithfully fulfilling the duties of his office, and called him Mordecai.

As Haman of old fell through refuge in falsehood, so the officer who sought to wrest Dyck from his position, had to leave himself, while Dyck (in answer to prayer) continued to serve in God's appointed place. Through this service many accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Others were strengthened and established in the truth, becoming themselves God's messengers to other Russian people.





The Christian Soldiers' Society, which later was reorganized into The R. E. T. Mission. Some of its members were killed while in the Lord's work, others have escaped to Canada and other countries. In the middle row the first from the left is Mr. Dyck, next to him Mrs. Dyck.

II

THE OPEN DOOR

THE work among the soldiers was carried on unofficially until the beginning of 1917, when the Revolution shattered the old governmental regime bringing religious freedom in its wake.

Seizing this opportunity, Jacob Dyck (a man of splendid ability, whose heart was on fire to win precious souls for Jesus) organized a Christian Soldiers Society. This work grew to such proportions that similar societies were established, where soldiers were stationed, in all the larger cities of Russia.

To further promote the Gospel, Mr. Dyck edited a magazine, called "Warning for the Soul"; established lunch rooms for the poor (who received not only physical sustenance, but food for sin sick souls as well) and with the help of the Christian young people from the Young People's Society at Moscow, street meetings were started. All of these activities were abundantly blessed of the Lord.



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III

DISBANDING OF THE SOCIETY AND THE BEGINNING OF THE TENT MISSION

WHEN the Peace Pact with Germany was signed at Brest-Litovsk, the troops demobilized and the Christian Soldiers Society disbanded. The question arose at one of the last meetings as to how God's work could be continued under the new conditions. One brother said "If the Lord would only give us a tent we might carry on the meetings and continue to proclaim the Gospel to those who have never heard it."

This proposal found an answering chord in the heart of Jacob Dyck for when he was a student in Germany he had been intensely interested in the Tent Mission there, and had prayed that a similar work might be opened in Russia. He now felt that God was answering his prayer for here assembled were many willing and capable helpers (just released from warfare) who, lacking only the tent, would make a strong army in the service of the Lord.





The first tent and a group of Missionaries on the day of its dedication at Moscow, 1918.

IV

THE FIRST ANSWERED PRAYER WAS GOD'S SEAL. THE RESISTANCE OF THE WORLD AND GOD'S HELP

WAS this really God's call? Answered prayer was His seal! The Brotherhood, in perfect accord, presented the need to Christ, and their petition was speedily answered for in a few days five thousand rubles were received for the tent.

With confident faith this consecrated band left Moscow in 1918, (with their God-given tent), to open meetings in Kazlov in the province of Tambov. This was one of the darkest regions in Russia, where the light of the Gospel had never shone, consequently it was a difficult field in which to work; but from the first the people listened both bewildered and fascinated. Naturally they began to question: "What has brought these strangers here?" "Although they reverently speak of God; have they some evil purpose in their hearts?" Then the Greek Catholic clergy told them that the end of the world had come, and that these strangers were anti-christs. They were, therefore, strictly forbidden to attend any of the meetings; but in spite of this strenuous opposition the Spirit of God mightily moved the hearts of the people.

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of age, who, after attending several of the meetings, was deeply convicted of sin, and earnestly prayed "Oh God, forgive all my sins for Jesus' sake! Take me and help me to be your disciple." Learning of the lad's decision his parents forbade him to hold any communication with the missionaries, or to attend any of the meetings. Feeling, however, that his Heavenly Father's commands were greater than that of any earthly parent, he came more often than before, in every spare moment seeking to establish a closer fellowship with his new found Saviour. His father, therefore, resorted to severer measures: called in two neighbors, who stretched the lad upon the ground and beat him until he was unconscious. There he lay perfectly helpless until his senses at length returned, then he painfully dragged his bleeding body to the tent, where the missionaries tenderly cared for him until he recovered.

In another place a woman, who had spent some years in a convent, vowed before the priests and "holy images" that she would burn the tent with the preachers in it. Taking a bottle of kerosene and some matches she hastened to perform her vow, but before committing the deed stepped into the tent to hear what was said. The Word of God, and the songs (which she had never heard before) strangely moved her, and there was a terrific mental struggle. At the end of the meeting, however, the Holy Spirit had complete victory. The poor soul wept bitterly as she gave the flask of kerosene to one of the preachers, confessing that she had vowed before the priests and the holy pictures that she would burn the tent with its occupants. "But the

Lord", she exclaimed, "has also forgiven me this sin." Seemingly very happy in her new found peace of soul, she continued: "For a long time I sought the Lord, and when I was young went into a convent. I visited so called 'holy places'; made vows and promises before sacred images, but all in vain. Finally I made a supreme effort to erase my sins, and propitiate God, by destroying those who were regarded as 'anti-christs'; and the priests blessed me for this ministry; but here I have met Him whom my soul hath sought! Unknowingly I was against him; but now I am saved forevermore!"

In the midst of the spiritual labors another need arose, that of doctoring those who were weak and sick. Although medical help was necessarily primitive, the preachers rendered all possible aid, and many sick people came daily to the tent for physical, as well as spiritual succor.

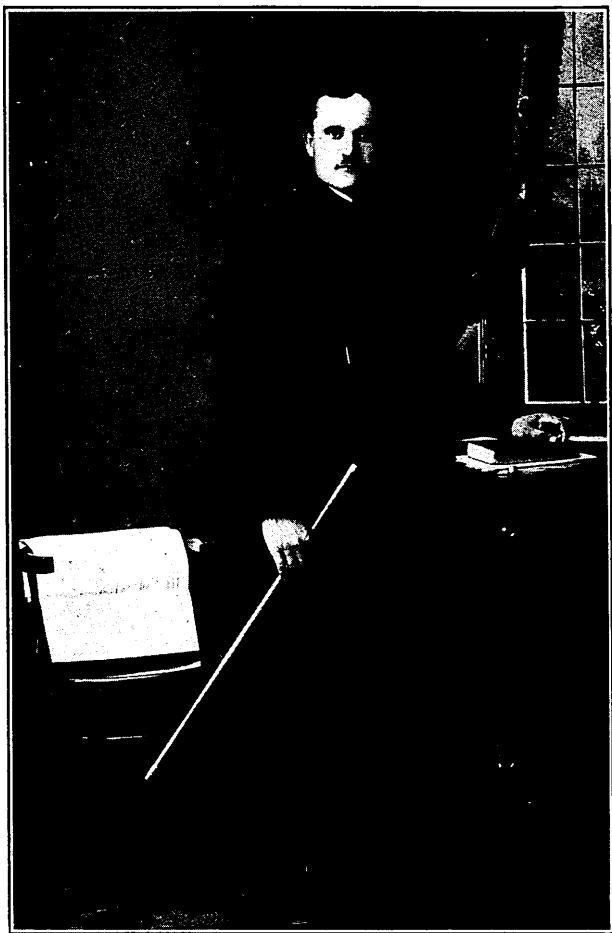
The approaching winter, always severe, forced the tent workers to cease their activities for a season, therefore the tent was stored by one of the local converts; and all of the workers (excepting four) went to their homes. Some were ex-service men who had not seen home since their conscription, and were indeed eager to meet their loved ones again. However, they were all purposing to take up the work again, (God willing) in the spring.

Brothers Ushkevitch and Michailov remained to impart spiritual strength to the new converts and to continue to preach the "Unsearchable riches of Christ" to others who had never heard. At the same time Mr. Dyck and H. E. left for

the southern part of Russia, where they continued to zealously proclaim the Gospel, with such power that hundreds, during the winter months, came to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. However, satan (ever the arch enemy of Christ and His followers, who has unceasingly maintained his persecutions for ages) was not inactive now. Some Mennonites were banded together for protection against Mackno's army, which was continually engaged in raiding, plundering and massacre. These Mennonites (who, according to religious belief, and in compliance with the commandment "Thou shalt not kill,") had not taken up arms for centuries—not even in the last war, now arose in keen agitation for self defense.

Simultaneously Jacob Dyck and H. E. passed through the place preaching the Gospel of peace, which was received with joy by those who did not believe in killing; but stirred up acrid bitterness amongst those who were clamoring for resistance. Finally those who were vociferously demanding self defense decided that Mr. Dyck should be forcibly prevented from hindering them in their plans; accordingly, during a meeting at Tiegerweide, as the young man came down from the pulpit, he was arrested by Mr. Plett of the same village. The plan was to send him next day to their headquarters at Halbstadt and have him shot; but some young people from the next village, (who were converted in Mr. Dyck's meetings only a few days before) hearing of his arrest, went immediately to Tiegerweide and demanded that Mr. Plett release him at once; thus God speedily delivered his faithful servant in his





N. I. Saloff-Astakhoff, president of The Young Peoples Christian Society at G., in 1918, before he joined the R. E. T. Mission.

hour of need, and his friends took him back the same night to Rueckenau.

A few days after his arrest Mr. Dyck came to the village of Kleefeld (where we had several weeks of Bible study under the leadership of A. A. Reimer) and told us about his arrest and God's timely deliverance. This was the first time the author met Mr. Dyck; and even to this day I remember the earnest prayer he offered for the conversion of Mr. Plett.

While working in the city of G., among the soldiers and young people, I heard about Jacob Dyck's work and was greatly interested in it.

In the beginning of 1918 I went south and visited the city of Halbstadt, where the Christians advised me to join myself to the work of the Tent Mission. When I met Brother Dyck he also invited me to participate in that campaign, and after two months of prayerful deliberation I accepted the call and took up the work.

The fervent prayer of Mr. Dyck for the conversion of Mr. Plett was soon answered. Soon after Brother Dyck's timely liberation, God's judgment fell upon Mr. Plett, who was stricken with cancer of the tongue. Conscious of his approaching death, and in the midst of terrible suffering, he sent for the minister. Unable to speak, he wrote: "This is God's judgment upon me because of all the evil I did to Mr. Dyck." After deep conviction of sin (this man, who had so long resisted the loving call of the Holy Spirit) found peace and pardon in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and was born again before he passed into the presence of the Lord.



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About this time southern Russia came under the government of the Bolsheviks, and Jacob Dyck (who had been so wonderfully used of God) worked with more success than ever. Very soon, however, he was again arrested and brought before the Revolutionist's tribunal. False accusations were brought against him by the enemies of the Lord, who maintained that their captive had been holding political meetings. Again the Lord protected him as a few days before his trial Brothers Ushkevitch and Michailov arrived from the north. Being an eloquent speaker (as well as an earnest follower of the Lord Jesus Christ) Mr. Michailov delivered a powerful address in Mr. Dyck's defense before the tribunal, which so moved the judges that they speedily released him.

These two consecrated men cited many instances of blessed results from their work in the north, which greatly rejoiced the hearts of their hearers. Thus the year of 1918 and the first period of the Tent Mission work ended.



V

THE FIRE BURNS BRIGHTER

AS the spring of 1919 approached, Jacob Dyck invited new workers into the Lord's vineyard, and in response many Brothers and Sisters consecrated their lives to God's service. Plans were made to send out several tents, instead of one, as in 1918. The Lord wonderfully blessed this work, revealing His power by performing what to men was seemingly impossible. One of the workers was still engaged in the war department, and, as civil war was at its height it was impossible for him to be freed for spiritual service. Many prayers, however, arose in his behalf, and after two weeks (just in time to get ready for the work) he was released from the war department and gave his whole time to the Tent Mission.

Before the campaign Brother Dyck organized a six weeks preparatory Bible course, giving the leadership to Mr. Ushkevitch and others; while he, accompanied by H. E. and Mr. Michailov, departed for the city of Charkow to have the Mission incorporated. Thence they proceeded to Moscow to obtain medical supplies, tents and Christian literature.

The Lord wonderfully blessed this expedition as they received a large supply of homeo-

pathic remedies, together with about fifteen thousand Bibles, New Testaments and other spiritual literature.

Brothers H. E. and Michailov remained in Moscow to ship supplies to the Mission center at Panutino in the province of Ekaterinoslav, while Mr. Dyck (after having received official permission for his work) left to join his co-workers in the south. Here he made the last plans and preparations for the groups who were to go to Panutino; also for the one band who was to go north to the province of Tambov to work in the tent which was left there the year before.

In the middle of May twelve Brothers and eight Sisters, joined later by thirteen others, divided into four groups. With hearts burning with zeal to win souls for the Lord; also with the blessing and fervent prayers of their relatives, these young soldiers of the Cross started on their journey. "Good-bye until we meet again, if not here, up there" was the parting benediction of adoring parents and fond relatives.

This was already the second year of the Revolution in Russia; a time of imminent danger, extreme peril and consequent restlessness. At this time General Denekin's army was moving up from the south and the Red army was retreating toward the north. All the trains were used for transporting troops, wounded and sick soldiers as well as supplies for the army; therefore it was extremely difficult for the missionaries to board any train. The Lord, however, was their helper! He also made it possible for them

to proclaim the message of salvation in the stations, on the over-crowded platforms and all along the way.

The jostling human whirl-pool could hear the sweet strains of Gospel hymns, and the wonderful message of God's love, on every side.



VI

UNEXPECTED DELAY—ENEMIES DEFEATED

THE last group to set out were Mr. and Mrs. Dyck, the author, and the Misses Enns, (one of whom by the reality of her sweet Christian life, captured the author's heart, and later became his wife).

The unrest was at its height when we started on our twenty-five mile journey to the station. On the way we were stopped by soldiers several times, who searched our luggage, demanded our papers of identification and plied us most unmercifully with questions.

Arriving at the station we had to tarry two days and two nights before we were permitted to proceed on our journey. Train after train passed, but it was impossible to obtain accommodations, because we were prevented by the soldiers. We could not understand this delay, but while we prayed and searched for a reason, the Lord revealed it. Occupied with ourselves and the difficulties of the journey, we had paid little attention to the thousands of refugees huddled around the stations, who were like sheep without a shepherd. They were homeless, driven by terror, knowing not whither they fled or where to go. The Lord, therefore, made it very clear that we must speak to this multitude and tell

them of His infinite love before we could go forward.

Standing at the open door of an empty freight car on a side track, we heartily sang Gospel hymns. At once hundreds of people came from all directions to hear the singing, and behold, a sea of heads was before us! For hours Brother Dyck and the author took turns in proclaiming the Gospel, alternating with loving invitations to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Friend and Saviour in this their hour of need.

With deep interest the people listened, not moving from their position for hours together. Some women were standing with children in their arms and many had tear-stained faces. The power of the Spirit was visible. Many were evidently deeply convicted of sin and broke down under the burden.

During one of the periods, when the author was preaching, a soldier approached and pointing a revolver at the author's head, commanded that he "Stop preaching and let the people go!" Remembering that "A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price," we obeyed; but as hundreds in the audience shouted "Go on", we continued the meeting by answering questions.

Many of the communists also asked questions, while others scoffed and threatened us with arrest, even promising to shoot us. At this juncture an occurrence emphasized the truth better than any sermon could have done. Out of the crowd came a young communist girl who was determined to destroy the influence of the

Gospel. "Do you believe, and yourself act as you have preached?" she inquired. Receiving an affirmative answer, she continued: "In the Bible it says 'Love thy neighbor as yourself,' look here, you have shoes and I am barefoot! I need a pair of shoes so give me yours and go without yourself!" The whole crowd was stirred and every eye upon us. Jacob Dyck, whom she addressed, quietly asked if she really needed the shoes, and when the girl said "Yes", removed his and promptly gave them to her. Evidently she had not expected this and was put to confusion, nevertheless she accepted them and made her way through the crowd.

Joy lighted many faces, and from different places was heard "Praise the Lord! There are some who still do as Jesus taught and what they themselves preach." But suddenly there appeared a young man, who evidently knew the girl, and was so indignant that he turned to her, exclaiming: "Shame on you, comrade, to act that way! You have several pairs of shoes at home, and have left them there just to come here and make trouble! The idea of taking shoes from people who are on their journey! I advise you to give them back at once!" The whole crowd turned against her, therefore there was nothing left for her to do but to give back the shoes and go quickly away.

When most of the crowd had dispersed, two weeping women remained, whom we invited into the car that we might enquire the cause of their grief. They sobbingly told us that they had thought that this was the last day of their lives, as earlier in the day they had decided to commit

suicide. The elder of the two (mother and daughter) said: "We were once Christians, but being deprived of our home, and separated from our loved ones, we had to flee from the front. Wandering with the crowds we have gone astray and fallen deep in sin. Life became more and more unbearable, until finally we were forsaken by everyone. Nobody wanted us any more! We have grieved the Holy Spirit and sinned against God, so there is only one way out and that is to end our miserable existence. This last moment, however, we have heard of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that His "Blood cleanseth from all sin," therefore a faint hope has come into our hearts that He might forgive us. O we do want to return to Him and live a holy life! He forgave the disciple who denied Him; will He forgive us also?"

For several minutes the car was filled with the sound of loud weeping, but soon gave place to prayer: "Oh God, our Father, henceforth we desire to serve Thee, our Redeemer and Lord. Thou hast saved us from eternal death. We have not kept our promise to serve Thee and have been most unfaithful; but Thou hast been faithful and we believe Thou hast forgiven all our sins. O we do praise and glorify Thee, our Saviour!"

As the two women arose from their knees, anguish had given place to joy and they reverently praised the Lord that He had found them, (as straying sheep on the very edge of the precipice) and had cleansed them from all sin.

Among the multitude of refugees we found several Christian families who were also very

much in need of comfort and encouragement.

When night came, we tried to make ourselves as comfortable as possible in the empty freight car; but several times Mr. Dyck and the author were disturbed by the communists, led away in the darkness; put through a severe grilling, and with much threatening were accused of trying to agitate the people against them. But the Lord miraculously protected us, and later in the night we were able to board a train, which was carrying the wounded and sick soldiers. Protected and guided, therefore, by the hand of God, we at length reached Alexandrovsk, where all the groups of Christian workers were again united. Some of the Brothers, however, had been arrested and put to hard labor digging trenches and shovelling coal, until the Lord again liberated them.

It was impossible for us to continue our journey as we were at the front, with the two opposing forces fighting all the time. The city was practically in a state of siege; the people were mobilized and driven out to dig trenches. No one felt safe, even in their own homes in this atmosphere of confusion and perplexity.

As there was not any possibility of an immediate departure, we felt that God had a special ministry for us here. Dividing into groups, we commenced an evangelistic campaign in the Baptist, and other Evangelical churches, also in the church of the Mennonites, where we preached in the German language.

These churches were filled to overflowing; and Christians (who had become weak in their

time of temptation and tribulation,) were strengthened in their purpose to follow the Lord and filled with a fresh desire to serve Him, as well as their fellowmen.

After a short time, feeling that our ministry in this city was finished, we waited upon the Lord until He clearly revealed that we were to proceed on our way. To leave this beleaguered city, however, was seemingly impossible. From the station Sinelnikovo (through which our way led) came General Denikin with his army. Unable to proceed, we decided to go from village to village, preaching the Gospel. It was a good fifteen verst to the nearest village and next to impossible to procure a team to convey our supplies there. After spending one whole day in fasting and prayer, the God of all power again undertook for us, sending a Mennonite Brother to offer his team for this purpose. Thus it was easier than we anticipated for us to leave the city; so that, (after being held up for several days) we were permitted to proceed on our journey, which was between the two contending armies. From the right advanced General Denikin's forces; while on the left the Reds were retreating, both dispensing death and destruction everywhere they went. In the midst marched the soldiers of Christ, bringing the message of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ, with its resultant peace, comfort and joy.

After we safely reached Markoosovo, a picturesque village on the bank of the river Dnieper, we again realized the presence of the Lord, knowing that He had been leading and guiding us, (as of old He guided the Israelites through the

wilderness,) silently but surely telling us when to go, and when and where to tarry for a season.

In Markoosovo we found two Christian families, who (with gratitude toward God) received us with great joy.

Then God revealed the reason why He had permitted us to be delayed one day longer in the city of Alexandrovsk! In both of these Christian families there were several members stricken with small-pox and near the point of death. It was impossible for us to be entertained in these homes; and equally impossible to receive admission into the houses of unbelievers; but the day before our arrival one Brother had finished building a new barn, which he now graciously placed at our disposal. Gratefully we accepted his kind offer, and proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as possible in our new quarters. Removing the canvas cover from our luggage, we improvised a curtain between the sleeping space for ladies and gentlemen. We sat on the straw covered floor to eat, with a tablecloth spread over straw; and we slept on our straw couches, exceedingly thankful to our dear Heavenly Father for His timely intervention in our behalf, even holding us on our knees for a day while He provided this temporary home for his foot-sore children.

We started our evangelistic work the first evening, after securing permission to hold them in the village theater. Every night the building was filled to overflowing, while sin-tossed souls repented of their sins, and surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

During the days of our sojourn in this place,

we visited many sick people in their homes, freely dispensed medicines, and as far as possible afforded relief to the suffering ones, which work the Lord signally blessed.

One beautiful moonlight night a group of Brothers and Sisters undertook a most dangerous ride across the river to the Mennonite "Bethany Hospital," for mental patients. Singing as we crossed, God delivered us from the bullets which some soldiers on the bank of the river were shooting dangerously near. On the other side of the river we had an audience composed of the staff of doctors and nurses, together with such patients as were able to understand the message.

Continuing our way from Markoosovo to Senelnikovo (a journey of some eighty verst) we held several meetings in every village along the way; and in each place souls were added to the host of the saved through Jesus Christ our Lord. Again we visited many sick people, giving them advice, and remedies and ministering to their various needs.

As we journeyed from place to place we had many unique experiences, often helping the Christians with their work in the fields, picking fruit, or mowing until our hands were painfully blistered. Again we would bend our backs and pull weeds for hours, making their gardens trim and neat.

Meanwhile the Sisters helped the women with their work, tending babies, washing dishes, sweeping and dusting and ministering to the sick.

In one place a Christian man started to build himself a house, making his own brick from clay

and straw; but the work progressed slowly under his hands; but when our young missionaries started to help him it grew very rapidly so that when it came time for them to leave it was all ready for the inside work.

In the evening, when the peasants had finished their day's work in the fields, we usually went through the village singing hymns, and inviting the people to the meetings. Wonderful hours of blessing followed—both for missionaries and people.

Often, when proceeding on our journey, the villagers would accompany us for a long distance. When we parted, many would say, with tears in their eyes, "How we do wish that people like you would visit us oftener, and would help to make us better men and women. Many people visit us now, to be sure; but they only come to rob and distress us; taking our last possessions and even threatening to kill us. Oh! when will a merciful God have pity on us!"

Gradually leaving the front behind, we approached Sinelnikovo, which was occupied with General Denikin's troops. We passed a few days in this city, where the Baptists enthusiastically received us, giving us a joyous welcome and their hearty co-operation in our evangelistic services.

Desiring to reach Panutino as quickly as possible, (which was about one-hundred miles distant) and to convey our tents thither, we decided to go by train as the way by that time was cleared of the Red army.

Reaching our destination, however, disappointment awaited us, (which seemed the harder to bear contrasted with the many blessings we

had received along the way) for we did not find our tents in Panutino as we had hoped. Believing, however, that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose," and that His Word is true: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord," we were better able to cope with the situation.

Brothers H. E. and Michailov (who had been left by Mr. Dyck in Moscow to send the tents, literature, and other supplies to Panutino,) had not been able to send them in time, and now they (as well as the supplies) were cut off by the front; fighting between Great Russia and the Ukraine.

We rested several days, and held several meetings in Panutino and in the Baptist church of Losovaja; then (seeing it was useless to wait any longer for the tents (we turned to the Lord for guidance. Spending two days in fasting and prayer, (together with mutual consultation) we at length decided that it was God's will for us to go, preaching the Gospel from village to village, without a tent.

With joy in our hearts we divided into two groups, (each armed with homeopathic medicines and religious literature,) one under the leadership of the author, the other following Mr. Ushkevitch, (a man who fluently spoke seven languages.) At the same time Mr. and Mrs. Dyck, (with their baby) stayed at headquarters.

The meetings were usually held in schools, churches and private dwellings; but when no other place could be secured they were conducted

on the streets and in the open squares; then all the near-by inhabitants would come and eagerly listen to the Gospel message. Gospel portions and tracts were also given to those who could read.

These villages were entirely without medical aid, consequently many people were stricken with prevalent diseases; but the Lord strengthened His servants to care for the sick and to relieve their suffering, as far as possible, during the short time they could stay in each place.

Many of the villagers had formerly been well to do people, but now presented a pitiable picture. Tired from the carnage of war with its accompanying hardship, torture and fear; and wearied by persecution and annoyance, they turned (as a flower toward the sun) to the "Sun of righteousness" who hath "healing in His wings." Only the "Gospel of the blessed God" could help these thousands of sorely harassed people in their urgent need.

The different armies, who in turn took possession of places, were not at all concerned regarding the welfare of its inhabitants; but contrariwise filled their treasuries by taxing them very heavily, besides supplying provisions for their armies by stripping the people of their possessions.

God was showering His blessings upon us and our work for Him, on the one side; while on the other the devil was not asleep! Through the Greek Catholic clergy the adversary was stirring up other people against us. These would come to our meetings armed with sticks, stones and other weapons, considering us "wolves" —

(as the Greek Catholic clergy called us;) but after listening to the Word of God they were convinced that we were not wolves, but sheep of the Great Shepherd. Thus many came in to destroy us but were converted before they went out.

In the village of Leonovka, (after obtaining permission to hold our meetings in the school-house) we went through the streets singing hymns, distributing tracts and invited people to the meetings.

The school-house was filled with an expectant audience before we arrived. When the meeting was well under way, and the interest most intense, the door suddenly opened and several men entered shouting and swearing. Pandemonium reigned! We tried to quiet the furious crowd by singing, (a method that had worked before) but without success this time for the noise, shouting, cursing and swearing increased so that we were compelled to close the meeting without ceremony. We were then commanded to go out or they would kill us; and they certainly acted as if they would tear us to pieces right there! Leaving the house we silently prayed: "Protect us Father, if it be thy will; if not help us to die like faithful soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, standing fast in the faith."

On the street was a large mob, and near the door a group of about thirty men armed with pitch-forks, scythes, spades, clubs, stones, etc. Knowing that these implements were intended for our destruction, with some trepidation we went forward, but not a hand was lifted against us. The Lord held their eyes as we passed through, and not one saw us. Just before we left

the building they started to quarrel furiously amongst themselves, (some trying to defend us, and others determined to silence us forever,) consequently they did not notice us as we passed through; proving "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

That very evening, in the yard of a Christian man's house, we held another meeting. Many of those who had met us during the day, and intended to harm us, came now and repented. Among others who were saved that night were two college girls, who were at home for a vacation. In spite of the strenuous opposition of the devil, souls were saved that night and the following day.

Meanwhile Denikin's armies were not idle. Sometimes the officers, (incited by the Greek Catholic clergy,) would send cordons of police after the bearers of the truth. Several times the leaders, and often the whole group, were arrested and surrounded on every side by police with lifted bayonets, then led away, like criminals, to headquarters. But, every time, despite arrest, trial and threatenings, the Lord Jesus Christ delivered us and brought glory to His name.

As we always preached the Gospel at headquarters, those who arrested us became unwilling listeners; thus they who had sought to subject us to a cross-examination were in their turn examined themselves regarding their vital relationship to God.

VII

SERVICE "UNTO THE LEAST OF THESE"

HAND in hand with war came pillage, resulting in dire poverty, while typhus fever, influenza and disease raged, taking away many young lives; while others were left in their homes, seriously ill, with no one to care for them. Our Sisters and Brothers lovingly ministered to those who were sick, who (by God's grace) recovered.

In this village of Petrovka we were told that there were some poor people very ill, possibly dying, in a little hut on the outskirts of the town. Proceeding thither we came to the house, which certainly presented a pitiable picture of utter wretchedness! Three human beings, (a young man about twenty years of age, his two sisters, one eighteen and the other eight,) were stricken with typhus fever and lying on the clay floor on unspeakably filthy straw. Their faces were just black spots, which upon closer observation proved to be flies. The floor of the hut was nothing but cold earth. These three, huddled together in one corner, were also bereft of their parents, who had been stricken with typhus fever and had died some time before. When their parents were gone, someone hired a woman to care for the family; but instead of doing as was expected, she stole everything she could take out of

the house, leaving the children to gradually die from hunger and disease.

There were two rooms in the hut, which God's children, (after a few hours of very hard work) made scrupulously clean. The beds, (one a bench, the other a double bed) were also made clean and comfortable with fresh straw, over which were placed clean rugs.

Unable to find any clean clothing for the children, our Sisters returned to their lodgings and supplied the need from their own wardrobe. Then the patients had to be cleaned up, which was no ordinary task! First the hair must be cut because of vermin! After cutting it and putting it on the floor, (before it could be burned) the whole mass was quivering and moving of its own volition! The poor sick bodies were also covered with lice; but in due time these poor children were made clean and comfortable, and looked very wholesome when the clean clothing was put on.

The Lord wonderfully blessed this effort of His children as all three patients recovered, and the young man was saved.

After a few days of tender care, as well as earnest prayer, these children were left in the care of a reliable Christian family.

Finishing our work in the village we went to other places; but four of my workers were infected, and after two weeks had to give up. For weeks they were near death's door; but the Lord was with them. He held the hand of His servants in His strong hands, even in "The valley of the shadow of death." One missionary, having all the symptoms of death, (temperature 104,

and pulse impossible to count) seemed so near the Glory-land, that Miss Enns went to her knees in her behalf. After waiting upon God for half an hour, she arose to find her patient's temperature nearly normal, and her pulse 97; which was a speedy and direct answer to prayer.

Many were the trials and hardships which the missionaries from the Tent Mission encountered along the way; and sad was the woe and suffering they witnessed, which called for deep sympathy and tender compassion, under which many would have broken down; but because they were "called, and chosen, and faithful" God strengthened them to "endure afflictions."



VIII

A THRILLING EXPERIENCE

IN the district of Barwenkovo the chief of police sent his assistants several times to arrest us. We had no thought of hiding or running away; but the Lord kept them so busy investigating our possible whereabouts that we had time to minister and preach the Gospel several days in each place, and then move on, before their arrival at the last place. It sometimes happened that when we reached a certain place we would hear that the police were searching for us in the village we had just left, but they never overtook us, which we attribute to the fact that the Lord confused their ways.

During an open air meeting in the village of Bandeshevo, where a large crowd had gathered to hear God's Word, a number of policemen, (armed to the teeth) forced themselves forward, and forbade us to proceed with the meeting. Simultaneously they announced that I was under arrest, and under obligation to accompany them to the station. The sight of the crowd, however, eager and thirsty for the knowledge of God, (like a parched prairie waiting for the rain) gave me courage to withstand their demands. Saying "I will proceed with the sermon under divine authority", and quoting Peter's defense: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to

hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye," I requested the policemen to listen to God's Word, after which I would willingly accompany them. Then I proceeded, but during the concluding prayer they knocked me on the head with a revolver, and commanded me to follow them.

After the meeting was finished, the whole group declared they would stand by their leader, hearing which the soldier placed them also under arrest, marched us off to headquarters, but all the way we sang praises to God.

In spite of the police the whole assembly accompanied us to the end of the village, while many along the way came from their houses, giving us their sympathy, and protested against their arresting the evangel.

It was quite dark as we approached a large and imposing building, located in a beautiful park. This house had once been owned by a wealthy gentleman, but was now converted into the police head-quarters.

Led through long dark halls, we came at length to the rotunda, which was perfectly dark until they lighted a few candles, which revealed that all around the walls, and by the windows and doors, armed soldiers were stationed.

One of the men who had arrested us, left the room to inform his superior officer of our arrival. Standing in the middle of the room, looking upon this unusual audience, (for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died, and who every day of this revolution were in danger of sudden death,) we were moved to tell them of the love of God in sending His only begotten Son to die, that they might have eternal life; and to invite them to believe and be

saved; therefore we commenced to sing hymns. At first there was a murmur of protest, but the beautiful words and the harmonious melody so influenced our audience that they ceased to protest, and invited us to continue.

During the singing the door opened, and the chief of police entered the room. As we continued singing, he evidently did not know what to do, and was a bit confused. He looked in turn from us to the soldiers, then slowly took his lighted cigarette from his lips, twirled it a moment in his fingers, then turned back and threw it in a corner, after which he removed his cap.

Perceiving that the divine influence had touched the heart of these men, I asked the chief for permission to pray. He looked at me, perplexity written on his face, then answered: "The place and circumstances are hardly conducive to religious liberty," but I simply started to pray for the chief of police, as well as all the soldiers gathered in the room, my heart filled to overflowing with compassion for these men. The whole vicinity was crowded with their enemies, and they were always in peril, even danger of death.

As I finished talking to God in their behalf, the chief, with evident emotion, apologized for the arrest, saying: "I have received a false report of you. You were represented as political agitators, consequently I ordered your arrest. Now I perceive my error and request that you kindly pardon me. Just one thing I would ask of you: Do not hold your meetings out in the streets so late at night, because under your name undesirable persons can form parties and make trouble.

Otherwise I have nothing against you. You are dismissed and may return to your lodgings."

After this he himself, (with his subordinates—candles in their hands,) ushered us out, two of the policemen accompanying us to show us the way.

It was late that night when we reached our lodgings at the home of a Christian family. After we had related our experiences, we reverently knelt praising the Lord for His wonderful deliverance, and for all the blessings of that memorable evening. We had not expected such a turn of affairs, consequently recognized again the Almighty hand of our God.

During the rest of our stay in this vicinity, we were unmolested and permitted to carry on the Lord's work as He led, surrounded by peace and safety.

Going from village to village, we continued our work for the sick bodies, as well as ministering to sin-sick souls; but in some places we noticed that the people seemed reluctant to take our medicine. Sometimes they would make the sign of the cross, and whisper something before they would drink it. Coming one day to an old woman, suffering with grippe, one of our workers prepared the medicine, and passed it to her; but the poor woman shook her head, saying in her feeble voice: "No! No! I will not take it! If you are good people, please give me some good medicine, but not the kind that will make me a Stundist! You see before I got sick, and was able to go to church, our priest told us during his sermon on Sunday that you people are going

from village to village giving the people something to drink, and that everyone who drinks that medicine is made into a Stundist! I would rather die than leave my holy Catholic faith! Oh! I feel so ill! I am so weak! Surely I will die soon, but I am so afraid of your medicine."

After a long time of persuasion and coaxing, this poor sick woman was willing to take the medicine, while we thanked the Lord that He had revealed to us this trick of satan to defeat His blessed work. The Greek Catholic clergy were working upon the superstition and credulity of the ignorant peasants, as is their wont. Surely an open and known foe is not as dangerous as an unseen one.



IX

“WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK
TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM
THAT LOVE GOD, TO THEM WHO
ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO
HIS PURPOSE”

AT the end of August Brothers H. E. and V. took the risk of crossing the front; leaving Moscow, they travelled south and came to Panutino, informing us that the tents, and a part of the literature were left in Moscow. About four thousand Bibles and four thousand New Testaments and other Christian literature, (which they had been able to ship before the front was established,) were taken by Denikin's armies at one station, and all trace of them was lost. We heard afterwards that the car had been forced open near the city of Mariupol, and everything carried off by the surrounding population.

We committed this loss to the Lord, praying that He would take care of these precious Books, and see that they were placed in the hands of people searching for the truth, making this loss to bear a rich harvest for His glory.

After the arrival of two other Brothers from Moscow, the workers took a much needed rest for two weeks in Panutino, at the same time re-

cruiting spiritually by reading God's Word and in meditation and prayer, as well as preaching the Gospel there and places in that vicinity.

Reinforced in spirit, soul and body, we again divided into four groups and went forth to preach the Gospel in new places, where each division experienced much blessing and visible help in their work.



X

DELIVERED AGAIN FROM DEATH

WHILE the groups were working in different places, Brother Dyck remained at headquarters, and was once more marvellously saved from execution.

The bitter hostility of the enemies of the Gospel became more and more visible, and we felt that our headquarters, (where each division was supplied from time to time with literature and other things) was being watched. We also felt that Brother Dyck was also secretly watched.

One day, (after holding a meeting at Losovaja—about seven verst from Panutino,) Mr. Dyck on his way home was stopped by an officer at the station, who said “You are arrested! Follow me!” As they proceeded, Brother Dyck noticed that the man was leading him to a desert place beyond the city, and sensed that he was being led to his death. The officer had his revolver ready to put him quietly out of the way. Having one more opportunity to preach the good news of salvation, Brother Dyck started to converse with the officer about the Lord Jesus Christ; but suddenly the officer turned and said: “You are saved once more! I am not able to do this deed, but take heed—be careful!” With this the officer put his revolver in its holster and quickly went away.

We were literally "as sheep in the midst of wolves," but (by the grace of God) not one missionary was afraid, neither did they for a moment consider leaving this hard field of labor, so fraught with danger, injustice and unquestionable hardship. On the contrary, they were ready to go forward under the protection of their Heavenly Father, remembering that not one sparrow "is forgotten before God," and that He had said: "Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Going from village to village in the province of Charkow, our group at length approached the village of Vodolaga. One man there, who was seeking after God, kindly offered us the use of a large hall, (which had formerly been a saloon,) for our evangelistic meetings. This building was centrally located and faced two large Greek Catholic churches.

Before the meeting we walked through the streets singing hymns, giving out tracts and inviting people to the services. Quite a crowd followed us through the streets, and a comparatively large hall was filled at the appointed time. After the meeting was in progress the Bishop of the Greek Catholic church entered, holding in one hand his bishop's staff and in his other hand his hat. Walking straight up to the pulpit he demanded that the meeting be closed at once and the people released. Courteously I invited him to be seated, and started to preach. He then turned to the people, and said "Go home!" No one seemed to heed the words of their shepherd but sat quietly listening to the Word of God. He stood for a moment between minister and

audience, then trembling with rage pounded his staff on the floor, crushed his hat vigorously in his hand, but perfectly helpless this "Holy Father" stormed out of the hall.

The audience continued to drink in every word of the Gospel, (which for the first time was being proclaimed in this large village) and many were reduced to tears, while quietness prevailed to the end of the service. We were not, however, permitted to go on undisturbed. Again the Bishop came, and this time was accompanied by two elders of his church and two of the village magistrates. Coming to the pulpit we were commanded to "Close the meeting in the name of the law!" Feeling compassion for the audience, so hungry for the love of God, and eagerly drinking in every word of the plan of salvation, (through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who shed His precious Blood to save men from sin,) I requested the Bishop and his party to kindly take seats, and not disturb us while we worshipped before God. Ignoring my invitation they turned and left the room.

After a heart-searching address, and the last hymn was sung, we knelt for prayer as many were weeping, and crying to God for forgiveness for sin. While I was also kneeling, with my eyes closed, someone suddenly knocked me on the head. Looking up I saw several policemen near me, who said "Stop praying! You are arrested!" The author, together with one of his co-workers, were then led, like criminals, to the office of the chief of police. Meanwhile the other members of our group were praying that God would protect us.

Reaching the police station, we learned that the chief had been summoned to the next village to investigate a robbery and murder; he was not expected to return until the next day. His assistant, (a very cruel and unreasonable man) was at that moment in another part of the town.

A few minutes after our arrival, the wife of the chief of police entered the office, and learning the cause of our arrest, glanced at us with great kindness and sympathy. Turning to the gendarmes, she said: "Please do not send for the assistant for I know that without investigation he will destroy these innocent men. Please let them wait until my husband comes home." But in spite of her ingenuous plea two of the policemen went at once to search for him. Knowing him to be a man of relentless cruelty (and that, according to the revolutionary laws he had a right to kill, or let us go), we turned in silent prayer to God.

Less than half an hour had passed when a carriage approached the building. In came the chief, accompanied by several policemen. His wife, who had seen him coming, hastened to meet him before he entered the building. Evidently she had told him all about us, and the reason for our arrest. He was an elderly man of kindly heart, and fine appearance, who had attained unto the rank of Captain.

After a short investigation, he apologized for the unjust act of the gendarmes, and released us, and also gave us permission to proceed with our meetings.

With hearts full of deepest gratitude to God

for His timely help, we left the room to join the other members of our group; but had only proceeded a few steps when in the gateway came the Captain's assistant, followed by two gendarmes who had gone in search of him. Recognizing us, one of them exclaimed: "These are the men whom we arrested!" Casting a sharp glance at us, the assistant inquired who had released us, and commanded us to follow him into the police station. Meeting the Captain at the door, he impatiently inquired, "Who released these men?" "How does this affair concern you?" returned the chief with some irony. "This is a very strange answer, Captain," retorted the assistant. Then continued: "These men are going from place to place gathering large crowds, holding meetings, and agitating against existing authorities. This band is here for the same purpose, and right under our noses conduct disorderly orgies, and all this without any opposition or punishment. We had better put them in a place from which they can never return." "Are your allegations substantiated?" inquired the Captain. "Have you seen or heard them agitate? Have you heard political speeches at their meetings?" "No, Captain," answered the man, "not personally, but I have obtained information from the best sources, Bishops and church elders!" "It is time that we learned not to listen to gossip," said the Captain. "One should personally investigate, and make sure whether or not a party is guilty." Turning to us he added, "Depart with God."

It had been very unpleasant to be compelled to listen to the conversation between these two offi-

cers; but it made God's wonderful protection more clearly seen. This Captain, (who had a right to release or kill us) had not been expected until the following day, but returned at just the right moment to release us; while the other officer, (burning with hostility to God's cause, and who would have done anything within his power to destroy us) came just a few minutes too late.

After joining the rest of our group, we praised and worshipped the God of our salvation, thanking Him from the depths of our hearts for our deliverance.

We had a few more days of blessed and unhindered work in this village, before we went forward to another place to "preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" to other precious souls.



XI

A SPECIAL TRAIN FOR THE TIRED MISSIONARIES

AFTER a few days of splendid and memorable work in the village of Andrejewka, in the month of September, we turned our attention to the large and populous village of Balaklava, which was some distance away. Desiring to get there in season to hold a meeting that evening, we were compelled to go on foot, (as we usually did,) because we did not have the means to go by train. We were told that the distance was not more than eight miles, so started out about three in the afternoon despite the fact that the heat was intense.

After walking about three miles we met a peasant, driving from the opposite direction. Enquiring the distance to Balaklava, he replied: "From where you are now it won't be less than ten miles." This news was rather unpropitious, though we knew from various experiences that almost always the peasant's miles had an additional "tail", which in this instance was more than we expected.

Proceeding on our way for another half hour, we met another peasant, who answered our inquiry by saying "Balaklava is no more than twelve or fourteen miles away." This was surely going from bad to worse. Already we were

very weary, and our packs, (containing literature, medicine as well as our clothing, and other necessities) seemed like so much lead upon our shoulders. The whole party looked ready to drop, especially the ladies, so we decided to rest a bit. Off went our packs on to the scorched grass, while we sank first upon our knees. What more fitting place to solicit help and strength to reach our destination than this immense sanctuary of His creation?

After a fifteen minutes rest we resumed our journey, which lay alongside a railroad track. Soon the noise of an approaching train was heard, which proved to be an engine and a couple of dirty freight cars. While passing us it slowed up, and two men waved and signalled us to hasten to them. We were somewhat surprised and did not understand what it all meant. Finally the engine stopped, but I waved for them to proceed, whereupon the train was backed up until it was parallel with us. Again they signalled for us to hasten. A number of armed soldiers were on the engine, so we concluded they had been sent to arrest us. Quietly leaving the road we approached the train. "Climb in" we were told, and in a moment found ourselves seated in the car, which contained a motley crowd of some ten or twelve men. They were playing cards, while their loud and profane language and violent gestures revealed their drunken condition. Realizing that these poor souls were in urgent need of salvation, we brought this need (as well as our need of protection and safety) to our Lord in quiet prayer, then commenced to sing softly a Gospel hymn. Gaining courage as well as volume, we sang until

the card game ceased and they all sat quietly listening to the singing.

The hymn ended, one of the men approached us and demanded money. "Pray explain yourself", I returned. "Give us your fare", said he. "What fare do you expect from us?" I inquired. "A hundred rubles for stopping the train, and fifty rubles from each one of you for your fares to Balaklava", was his modest demand.

Knowing that we were in a predicament requiring diplomacy, and in the power of rather questionable people, I replied: "All right my friends, your demands will receive attention in the office of the Military Commander at Balaklava, but while we are on the way we will sing you a few more hymns and read you something you have never heard before. It is about the Lord Jesus Christ and His divine love and forgiving grace. He died on Calvary's cross that all sinful men might be saved." Suiting action to words, I opened my Bible and read the "Word of life" and explained the way of salvation. Not expecting me to take command of the situation, the men were evidently discomfited, but did not make any attempt to interrupt me.

Fortunately the train came out into the open country where we could see the welcome sight of Balaklava in the distance. The men stopped the train a mile or two away from the station, and forced us to leave it immediately. Evidently they were afraid we would take them to the office of the Military Commander, where they would have to answer for their unlawful deeds. We thanked the soldiers for giving us a lift, but requested them not to resort to such methods

in the future. We learned afterwards that these men had invited other people into their train, ostensibly to give them a ride when they were tired, but robbed them of their possessions taking everything the poor victims possessed.

Again we thanked our Heavenly Father for His guardianship and timely help, which landed us in Balaklava in ample time to hold the evening service. Satan intended to hinder, as well as injure us, but the Lord over-ruled it for good. On foot we could not have reached our destination that day, but now we had time for rest and refreshment before opening our evangelistic campaign in the home of a Christian family. A large crowd assembled, listened earnestly to the "Word of truth", and were visibly moved by the love of God and the call to repentance.

Thus the Lord led us day after day, holding our hands in His Almighty hand, and leading us along the way. We followed Him, asking not what the future would bring. Without any material support; without telling anyone of our needs, without advertising ourselves or our work, we trusted Him implicitly to supply every need, and He gave us, day by day, our daily bread. We did not have any spiritual power in ourselves, but we gave the little strength we had to Him, and He wrought marvelous things for His glory. Therefore thanks and everlasting glory be to Him "Whom having not seen, ye love."

XII

THE CLOSE OF OUR SUMMER WORK AND THE GREAT THANKSGIVING FESTIVAL

FALL came at last, accompanied by foggy days and plenty of cold rain. Walking from village to village became more difficult; clothing and shoes were worn beyond hope of repair, and our health was also sadly impaired. Even our spiritual forces were abating. We all needed change and rest in order to gain a fresh supply of energy; therefore we decided to close the work for this season that we might lay up store for a larger scope the following year.

The first of October our missionary groups gathered at our headquarters at Panutino for a grand thanksgiving service. We had experienced many blessings during our summer campaign for which to thank God: preservation, material aid, protection and guidance.

It was also a farewell meeting for all our beloved Christian friends in the vicinity, but our expectations were exceeded by actuality. From far and near came newly converted Christians to be present at this occasion, which was a really wonderful harvest for the celestial granaries. Many, (who had been converted during our summer campaign,) were present to praise and glori-

fy the God of their salvation. All were burning with zeal to serve the Lord with their whole heart. Others, who had up to that day lived without Jesus, were persuaded by the Holy Spirit to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, and consecrate their lives to His service. A number of young Sisters and Brothers expressed their desire to join the Mission, and the following summer, (D. V.) go out with us to win souls for the Master.

Having enjoyed so much (during the summer months) the Christian fellowship of the dear ones in Christ, (and especially this festival day of many blessings) we were overwhelmed with the pain of months of separation; besides, a strange feeling of foreboding settled upon our hearts lest this was a farewell "until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

Some spoke freely of this premonition, while others, (not desiring to sadden us) revealed their anxiety by earnest prayer that God would guide and protect us as never before.

In spite of the brave effort to comfort ourselves by the hope of a joyful meeting in the summer, tears were flowing from every eye.



XIII

BARRIERS ON OUR WAY AND A GREAT HARVEST IN DARK DAYS

AFTER the departure of our friends, we stored most of our paraphernalia in the "house of prayer" of the Christians in Panutino, then started south for our homes. It was our purpose to arrange a course of Bible study during the winter months, to which the workers (and new recruits) would be invited for special preparation for the next summer's campaign, but the Lord of the harvest had other plans.

Before leaving we heard that our direct route south was blocked, but had hoped it was only a rumor. Mackno and his troops, however, again came from the south, and with fire and sword was destroying everything in his path. At the same time he was driving Denikin and his forces before him. The city of Alexandrovsk (through which our path lay) had fallen. Knowing not whether to wait for a turn of affairs, or go on by a roundabout course, we finally decided to go on by another route. This would take us to the city of Ekaterinoslav, where there were Christians who had many times invited us to hold a series of Gospel meetings with them. Praying for divine guidance, we decided to visit them

now, and then proceed southward on foot, visiting the villages along the way.

Thus we took in Chortitza (a large Mennonite settlement at that time urgently in need of evangelistic work), from whence we had also received a number of pressing invitations to bring them the Gospel.



XIV

A RICH HARVEST IN DAYS OF PERIL

REACHING Ekaterinoslav we formed our party into four groups, and for ten days held a meeting each day in different parts of the city and out in the suburbs. The halls were over-crowded and the Spirit of God worked mightily. One large hall in a university accommodated vast throngs, and sometimes thousands listened intently four or five hours to the Gospel message.

One evening the service was prolonged until midnight, (after which hour street car service would stop.) As many of the people had come from distant points, we suggested closing the meeting so that they might go at once and get the last street car, but with one voice the desire was expressed to continue the meeting: "Go on", they said, "we will walk home." "Please read and speak to us some more!" "We want to hear the Gospel truths!" was heard on every side.

The Holy Spirit was working mightily and many souls were turned to Christ during these days, but at the same time the power of satan was also working. Fear reigned in hearts as Mackno's army was fast approaching the city, then held by Denikin. For days there was furious fighting, and oh how it rained! The boom of artillery seemed to shake the very foundations

of the city, and for a time we had to lie on the floor to escape the bullets. Like the lurid fires of Tophet the smoke and flame of battle hung like a pall over the place. Twice Mackno's troops had broken into the city, but had been driven back by Denikin's desperate defenders. Slain men and horses lay for days in the streets of the city.

Sometimes, when war dangers multiplied, we had to postpone meetings already announced, or bring others to a close without ceremony.



XV

THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

ON the tenth day of our stay in the city, after a fierce battle, Mackno and his troops took possession of the city. A veritable reign of terror then commenced! The soldiers burnt down shops and public buildings, and breaking into homes ruthlessly killed the owners and all people within, plundering and stealing whatever they liked. Plunder and ravage held its sway over the stricken city.

No man would run the risk of leaving his home, therefore our evangelistic work abruptly ended. We were now in the territory occupied by Mackno, but this unwittingly opened the path for the continuation of our journey south where we could visit the Russian and German settlements along the way.

One cold day, with the rain pouring down (also with manifold sensations of relief), we left the city. We were able, (by God's help), to secure one team for the cartage of our supplies, but as usual, we were obliged to go on foot. The nearest village was about 15 verst away, which distance ordinarily would not have taxed our powers of endurance, but on this occasion we were exhausted beyond expression. For days it had been raining, completely inundating the road

in places, filling hollows with muddy water, and at best the road was one mass of loose sticky mud, which stuck to our feet, clogged the wheels of our vehicle and sadly hampered our progress. Sheets of cold rain beat in our faces, while on every side lay the nude bodies of the men slain in battle, which added a sickening note to the desolate scene.

From time to time we could still hear the boom of artillery. Straggling vans of Mackno's men, (bringing the army baggage and supplies on wagons, which scarcely moved in the mire,) passed us, driving toward the city.

Naturally speaking, conditions could not have been worse, but spiritually our hearts were peaceful and happy under the protection of our Heavenly Father for we were not journeying for any selfish consideration, but for His glory and the salvation of the souls of men. No marvel then, that treading that dark valley of death, our voices often rose in triumphal choruses of praise to Him who could turn this darkness of man's woe and horror into the brightness of His unclouded day.

Weary to exhaustion, some of our workers, (unable to move in their heavy water-soaked shoes, which presented nothing but a mass of mud) took them off and plodded along barefooted in the cold water and mire.

Slowly but surely we went onward. The shades of this short October day were darkening when in the distance could be seen the outposts of our destination, the village of Alexandrovka, which welcome sight seemed to renew our strength and revive our weary and exhausted

frames. It darkened perceptibly, yet between us and our destination lay a turbid and swollen river. To avail ourselves of the fast fading light, (so that we might see to cross it) we tried to hasten our footsteps, but it was pitch dark when we reached the place. At length we found the bridge, (which was at least submerged in two feet of water), and with much trepidation picked our way across, realizing as never before the truth of God's precious promise: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

The next day we had a good laugh when one of the party, reading to us his diary regarding the day before, at the close added: "Everything was all right, except that when crossing the brook the water ran into my boots." Having travelled some 15 verst through a quagmire, it was not surprising that one should have wet feet, however, what he meant to convey was that the water was so high that it flooded his high knee boots.

At length the red lights of the village twinkled before us.

Arriving at the home of a Christian family, we were joyfully received, and together praised God that He had brought us safely to our desired haven.

Shaking off as much mud and clay as we could, (but still drenching wet) we commenced our evening service.

The news of our coming had reached the people before we reached our lodgings, so that (despite the rain and mud) they had come in

eager groups to hear the Word of God. Midnight still found us reading, explaining, and expounding the marvellous story of God's love for a perishing world, while around us, in the pale flickering light of a lamp, crowded the attentive listeners.

Unfortunately a large squad of Mackno's troops were quartered in the village, which was a sad handicap to our work as they evinced the keenest hostility, and endeavored in every possible way to break up the meetings. We managed, however, to hold two; then drying our clothing and packs, we divided into two groups, and went toward the German settlement of Jasi-kovo. We held a number of evangelistic meetings in every village along the way, where many new converts were added to the army of the Lord and believers were encouraged and strengthened.

Like the tolling of a warning bell, was the fact that in every meeting there appeared a number of Mackno's troopers, but even on some of these the Spirit of God fell with a softening influence, as if it were leading to repentance. As a rule, however, the majority presented a hostile front, which seemed to increase and grow more threatening and formidable from day to day.



XVI

THE WAY TO CALVARY

OUR journey now seemed like an upward ascent to Golgotha. Hardships increased while the clouds around us grew darker. There was a great longing in the hearts of several of our workers for the Home beyond the starry sky; consequently the Second Coming of the Lord, and the ascension of the church, was a favorite theme for conversation and sermon.

The weather was nothing but intermittent rain, which was naturally unfavorable for our work, making it especially difficult to walk from place to place; besides one could feel a tenseness in the very atmosphere, due perhaps to the fact that this region was in the grip of the army of communists and anarchists, bringing untold suffering in its wake.

Finally on the twenty-second of October both groups came together at Nickolaipol. Knowing beforehand of our arrival we were received with rejoicing. The Christian inhabitants invited as many as possible to come to the church and the homes of believers, (where the meetings were to be held) so that our three days' stay in the village was passed in almost continual evangelism and prayer; resulting in a large number of conversions. Thus joy and blessing was sent by God during those wild and stormy days in the midst of death and destruction.

XVII

CHANGING OUR ROUTE
AND
WHAT IT COST US

THERE was plenty of work in this region, but our time was limited as we also desired to visit some places in Chortitza before reaching our destination.

During our farewell meeting, Rev. Shellenberg urged us to prolong our stay for a few days and visit three more villages, giving us the following sorry information regarding one: "It is," he said, "the town of Doobovka. There is not a Christian in the whole place; in fact no one has ever heard the true doctrine of salvation there. The people maintain a hostile spirit and do not care to have a believer in their town. Only a little while ago a Christian man bought a farm there, but when he took his goods they would not permit him to enter nor take possession of the farm he had bought."

Such unfavorable reports naturally helped us to decide that we would go there, with the Lord, no matter what it would cost to carry the glad tidings of salvation to that sin infested village.

Forming ourselves into four groups, one stayed in Warwarovka, while the rest chose to visit the places suggested by Mr. Shellenberg.

Daily the danger from Mackno's army in-

creased, which was revealed by their constant attendance at our meetings, and their surveillance of our every movement. Many of them had once known Christ and the Gospel, but falling away, were now in that appalling state where the least mention of God filled them with ungovernable fury.

While conversing with some of them one day, we inquired why they shed innocent blood, and burned everything in their path, and this was their reply: "If we were like the beasts we would only slay when attacked, or hungry, but we are worse than beasts, it is easier for us to kill a man than to slay a dog!"



XVIII

THE LAST MEETING AND THE LIFTED HAND OF DEATH

AT one o'clock October twenty-fifth, each group started for their appointed places. It was agreed that we would reassemble on the following Tuesday; then in a body continue on our way. One party was composed of Mr. Dyck, the Misses E. Hiebert-Suckau, R. Rosenberg, Oscar Ushkevitch and Brother Golitzin. They decided to go to Doo-bovka, the village about which Mr. Shellenberg had given such an unauspicious report, and he decided to accompany them and share in the joy of attending the first Gospel meeting ever held in the place.

Arriving at their destination, they held a meeting in the school-house, but excepting the attendance of some women and children, the rest of the inhabitants kept away.

In spite of such an unpropitious beginning, they decided to hold another meeting at seven o'clock in the evening. This surpassed the most sanguine expectations as all the inhabitants of the village, (including young and old) came to the meeting.

During the preaching of the Gospel, and the personal work afterward, many men and women

confessed their sins and turned to God for pardon. They had never heard before of God's love in giving His Son to die for their sins, and were loath to leave the meeting.

Saturday, October twenty-sixth, it was planned to hold a meeting for the new converts at nine o'clock in the morning; for youth and children at noon, and evangelistic meetings at two and six p. m. Thus they laid out the work, but the will of our Heavenly Father decreed otherwise: "His ways are not our ways, neither His thoughts our thoughts."

Before partaking of their breakfast, the door was suddenly thrust open and a number of Mackno's soldiers, armed with revolvers and sabres, without any ceremony, sat down to the breakfast that had been prepared for the missionaries. During the meal, Mr. Dyck (moved with compassion for these lost and fallen souls) commenced to talk with them about the vital things of life, and the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some half hour later another squad of soldiers rode into the court-yard, dismounted and entered the house. They also listened to the conversation, which continued until noon. The soldiers asked many questions, which our brethren answered with love and patience, seeking to wake an echoing chord in these dark souls ruined by the corrosive poison of pillage, murder and death.



XIX

THE MARTYRS

AT midday the troopers went away to visit other homes. Brother Dyck, accompanied by Mr. Shellenberg and the two lady workers, departed for the school-house to hold their meeting for youth and children, while Mr. Ushkevitch went to view a new convert, and Brother Golitzin (not feeling well) remained at home.

On Friday morning, just before departing for their different appointments, the missionaries held their usual prayer meeting. Reading the 14th chapter of John, Brother J. Dyck spoke about the mansions in the Father's house in such a way that it made us feel that he would soon see those beautiful mansions. In the meeting the next night, pleading with souls to surrender their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ, he said several times: "If you wait until tomorrow many of you may not be able to hear me any more and have a chance to repent."

The hours of each life had been numbered, and some of them felt that something momentous was about to occur.

Brother Golitzin, when in the city of Ekaterinoslav, in a conversation with a Christian friend, voiced his convictions, saying: "I feel that my departure is at hand. It is a strange

feeling, like a premonition. I long to go, yet the feeling is also accompanied by an unaccountable sorrow, because since my conversion I have been able to do so little for my Saviour and have lived too much for myself." All that day he was unusually preoccupied and thoughtful.

The lady missionaries were conducting their meeting for the children, while Brothers Dyck and Shellenberg, (after dealing with several earnest, God-seeking persons), knelt for prayer.

At this juncture a number of Mackno's soldiers, heavily armed, entered the building. Darkly scowling, with sabres drawn, they approached Brother Dyck and roughly demanded his identification papers, and also inquired who had given him permission to go around preaching.

Knowing the intention of these men, and feeling that his end was very near, Mr. Dyck gave to them his papers; then he opened his Bible and read to them God's Word. He explained its meaning, and pleaded with these murderers to repent and come to Jesus. The faces of his listeners bent lower, they drew back abashed.

"Who we are, and why we are here, I think you all know without my papers," said Mr. Dyck. "We are sent by God Himself, who so loved you and me that He gave His Son to die for us on Calvary's cruel tree. You are seeking us with a deadly purpose, but what advantage will you gain by ending our lives? We are ready to go into eternity, for death to us will only mean going into the presence of the Master whom we serve, but what will await you after this life of

murder and pillage? The innocent blood which you have shed will call out, (like that of Abel's) for vengeance. In the Book of life it is written: 'We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to answer for all the deeds done in the body'; and it also says that no robber, pillager, murderer, drunkard or sinner shall inherit the kingdom of God, but they do have their part 'in the lake which burneth with fire,' which is the inheritance given by the one whom you are now serving.

"Unshaken as the foundation of the mountains is the truth that 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' If you sow fire and blood, fire and blood will be your harvest then. My friends," (with earnest voice he continued): "to-day may be the last time you will hear, through me, the Gospel of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Think well, I beseech you, and weigh the issue. It may not yet be too late. Stop on your headlong course to darkness and ruin! I will pray God for His divine intercession. He bends toward you from His throne on high, because He is the incarnation of love and mercy." As Brother Dyck paused, the bent faces of his listeners indicated a fearful struggle taking place in their souls, they clenched their weapons, and one, (raising his eyes full of agony and woe,) looked Dyck full in the face and said: "You are right, we have realized all this," but before he could say any more the door opened again, and another group of armed soldiers entered. In the midst, supported by two of them, was Bro. Golitzin. His face was covered with blood, (which flowed freely from under his cap) and he appeared

in a dying condition. Bro. Dyck's horrified exclamation seemed to partially arouse him, so that he opened his eyes, (glancing with a look of love and tenderness on the face of his leader and friend) and murmured "For His sake." Unconsciousness then mercifully ended his sufferings.

At the same time, (when the group with whom Mr. Dyck had conversed turned to the school-house) another squad, with murderous intent, hastened to the missionaries lodgings. Finding only Golitzin present, they had questioned him; then one, (fiercely raising his gun) dealt the missionary a cruel blow on his head. "Today," he yelled, "we will silence you forever! You have tried to frighten us with hell, and have entreated us to obey God, but you are the one who will experience hell's torments now. We do not fear your God, or hell! We will hurl Him from His throne as we have hurled earthly kings from theirs. We will silence all who dare to speak of God, all these servants of Capital!" Accompanying these blasphemous cries with a shower of blows, the whole party, with demoniac fury, fell on their helpless victim and pounded him until, blood-stained and battered he fell and lay in a pool of crimson in the middle of the room. Then his quivering motions and piteous groans ceased, and this brave and loyal servant of Christ lay like one dead.

"Hostess", cried one in a voice of thunder (addressing Mrs. P., the landlady, who terrified and trembling, crouched in an adjoining room,) "Bring a pail of cold water immediately! We must bring this pheasant to his senses! Also

bring some dry clothing! We will take him for a walk in the streets, but in this condition he will terrify his partisans ere they are brought to the same state!"

The weeping widow, trembling and hardly able to stand, had no other recourse than to obey and bring her late husband's clothing, and the pail of water.

The splash of cold water partially revived the ebbing senses of Brother Golitzin, and again groans filled the room. Trembling still like a leaf, the widow gently pulled off the blood-stained garments and tried to assuage the flow of blood by bathing the wounds with cold water; then she hastened to dress the poor man in the dry suit.

As Mr. Golitzin was dragged to one side and lifted into a sitting posture, Mrs. Peters attempted to wipe up the blood from the floor, but was prevented by the leader of these men, who shouted: "Stop! You must not clean the floor! We will make him lick up his own blood" he thundered. "Here preacher! You keep telling people that in the blood of your Jesus Christ they can receive cleansing, so now we will see if you will be clean after you wipe up your own blood. Get to business," he shouted, giving his victim a vicious blow on his bent head.

Summoning his last strength, Brother Golitzin crawled to the center of the room and painfully began to wipe up the blood.

"Now", continued the leader of the mob, "You must take us to your dear Brothers and Sisters. You will all be happier to travel together the

road from our world to your paradise, (which you have promised to others) beyond the grave, exhorting them to bear with meekness every grievance from blood-suckers and exploiters. We will now give you a chance to suffer and go to your paradise! You two", (turning to two of his soldiers,) "take him up and lead him or he will yet refuse to obey us!"

Roughly they lifted this martyr for Christ, and between them led him out. "Hasten," commanded the leader, "Or the other birds may yet escape! Goodby, hostess," said he, turning to the trembling widow, "thanks for your hospitality to these valuable Christian folk! Do not worry over this proceeding, we will yet perform a similar operation on many in your flourishing village! If you would save your own skin, beware! Do not show your nose on the streets, or you will go the way of your jolly boarders! Remember, and beware!" With this parting threat he slammed the door and joined his soldiers.

A few minutes walk brought them to the school-house, just as a couple of their men came out. "Well, comrades, have you shipped our ministers from earth to heaven? We wanted to collect them all together for a merrier send off! What! You are silent! Have they managed to scare you with talks of sin and eternal punishment in hell?"

"They are all alive yet," answered the one who had listened attentively to Mr. Dyck's words of entreaty and exhortation. "Shall we not desist this once?" he continued, "Have we not shed enough innocent blood?" "What! (like a fiend

shrieked the leader who had instigated Golitzin's ordeal) You look white and trembling, like an old woman. Are you scared of a little blood, or of eternal punishment? Shame on you! Beware or we will also chop off your head. Draw out your sabres! Ready! We will pour some courage into you, the more the merrier!"

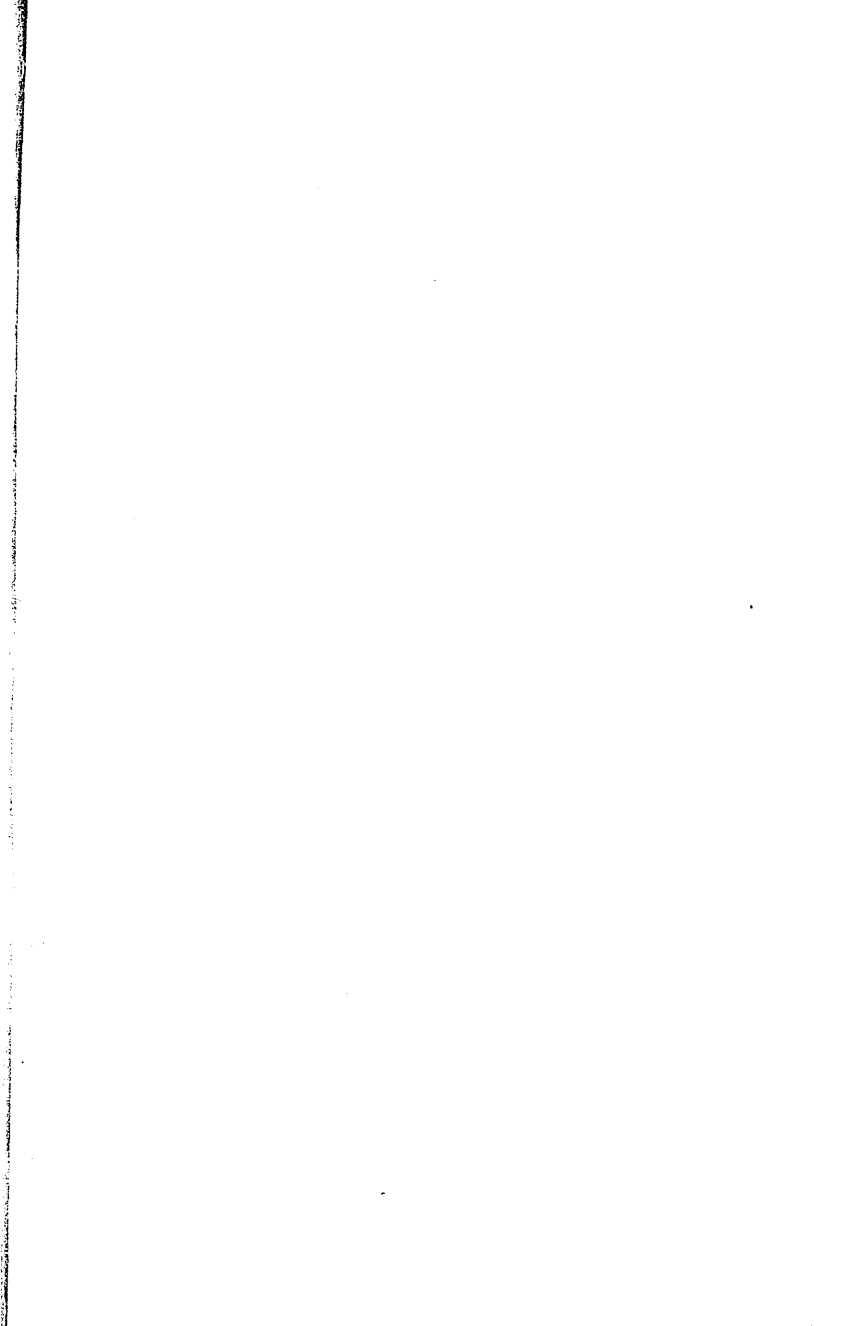
Dragging in the wounded and dying Mr. Golitzin they appeared before Brother Dyck. From the other room came the other two workers, and the two ladies were transfixed with horror at the sight.

Just a glance passed between the doomed witnesses for Christ, but it seemed to give each one the necessary courage to endure to the end. That telegraphic look of comprehension seemed to say: "The time has come for us to seal our testimony with our blood."

"Stand! Line up against the wall!" commanded the leader. It's a long time since we had such a lovely target. We will practice a bit now, but wait," said he, turning to his men, who had raised their sabres and had already dealt a blow or two on the helpless group, "wait, comrades, we will not dirty this public school building with their vile blood, but take them to some barn and dispose of them there."

Surrounded by the bloodthirsty, maddened mob, (who flourished their sabres and brandished their revolvers,) the missionaries were led (like lambs to the slaughter) across the street to an abandoned barn.

Mr. Ushkevitch, who had been at the home of a newly converted man, was also brought,





A group of Missionaries of The R. E. T. Mission two weeks before five of this party were martyred, in October, 1919. Mr. Dyck is in the center with his baby boy (who shared the hardships with us) on his lap; on his left is Mrs. Dyck, near to her, Miss E. Hiebert-Suckau, and in the center of the first row is Miss R. Rosenberg, both of whom were slain. The slain men have crosses, Mr. Golitzin over his head, Mr. Ushkewitch on his arm.

(after a little while) to that old barn, which became the ghastly sanctuary where these six brave and loyal missionaries, (through great suffering) gave their last testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ, and sealed it with their blood.

It was decreed by God that in after days, when meeting some of these wretched murderers, they recounted some peculiar instances attendant on the death of our beloved friends. "We had never before slain such people," said one. "Even when we hacked them with our sabres they knelt and implored us to repent and return to God, saying that He would forgive us. Not one begged for mercy or any quarter for themselves. Very strange people they were to be sure!"

At the same time these martyrs were suffering death, the other three groups of missionaries were having the most harrowing experiences at the hands of the same terrible force of Mackno's army. Death stared them in the face many times, but it was not God's will that these should also seal their testimony with their blood, excepting Brother Reimer, who was assassinated at Nicolaipol. Two workers of the group left at this place were ill with typhoid fever. Mr. Reimer, (who took care of the sick) went to the doctor to report on their condition, but failed to return at the appointed time.

About noon time Mrs. Dyck, Miss Enns and Miss Martens, (who had stayed at Warvarovka to do a little sewing for the workers) heard that a minister and a doctor had been killed. Thinking that it must be our Brother Reimer, (but hoping that he might still be alive and that pos-



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(after a little while) to that old barn, which became the ghastly sanctuary where these six brave and loyal missionaries, (through great suffering) gave their last testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ, and sealed it with their blood.

It was decreed by God that in after days, when meeting some of these wretched murderers, they recounted some peculiar instances attendant on the death of our beloved friends. "We had never before slain such people," said one. "Even when we hacked them with our sabres they knelt and implored us to repent and return to God, saying that He would forgive us. Not one begged for mercy or any quarter for themselves. Very strange people they were to be sure!"

At the same time these martyrs were suffering death, the other three groups of missionaries were having the most harrowing experiences at the hands of the same terrible force of Mackno's army. Death stared them in the face many times, but it was not God's will that these should also seal their testimony with their blood, excepting Brother Reimer, who was assassinated at Nicolaipol. Two workers of the group left at this place were ill with typhoid fever. Mr. Reimer, (who took care of the sick) went to the doctor to report on their condition, but failed to return at the appointed time.

About noon time Mrs. Dyck, Miss Enns and Miss Martens, (who had stayed at Warvarovka to do a little sewing for the workers) heard that a minister and a doctor had been killed. Thinking that it must be our Brother Reimer, (but hoping that he might still be alive and that pos-

sibly he might be saved if he could be found and given attention in time), Miss Enns felt that she must make an attempt to find him.

Not a person was on the streets, save some soldiers (with sabre lifted high in air) would now and then cross the street to enter another home in search of some new victim to torture. But the Lord surely sent His angel to protect His child, and she safely reached the last house in the village. Here a soldier suddenly stood before her and enquired if there were any soldiers in the house. Silently crying to the Lord for protection, she tried to appear as calm as possible, (though trembling with fear) and the Lord graciously delivered her. There were a group of twenty or more soldiers near the doctor's house, (where she had intended to look for Mr. Reimer) so she dared not go in, but went to the next home instead and asked the people to kindly let her stay there until the departure of the soldiers. Explaining to them that she was searching for the missionary, they said: "We saw some soldiers stop an evangelist, take off his shoes and lead him into a barn, where they shot him."

Conducting Miss Enns to the barn, and opening the door, she saw that it was indeed Mr. Reimer, but there was no help—he had been instantly killed as the back of his head had been blown open by a bullet from a revolver and his brains were oozing out.

The owner of the house and barn, (who was also a Christian,) had also been killed by the murderers. Entering the house, Miss Enns found

this man lying in a pool of blood in one room, while his sorrowing widow and six children were piteously weeping in the other.

It was heart-breaking! There was absolutely no one to comfort them or render assistance; not even to take care of the dead bodies that needed to be cleansed and prepared for burial. Everyone was afraid to come near the place for fear that they would be branded as friends of the slain—consequently be killed themselves.

Feeling that it was God's plan for her to help this stricken family, Miss Enns courageously went to work. She could persuade no one to enter the room where Mr. R. had been murdered until the blood had been cleaned up. Facing the task, (alone with God) Miss Enns washed up the gory flood with her own hands. After that two young men consented to bring in Mr. Reimer's body and place it beside the body of the other victim.

Now another hard, sickening and dangerous task awaited this young woman: that of dressing and bandaging the smashed heads and preparing the bodies for burial. Turning away for a moment, and crying to the Lord in her distress, He graciously sustained and helped her, otherwise she would not have been able to do it.

Two days later the two bodies, (together with several others in the town) were buried, but none of the missionaries were able to be present, as it was altogether too dangerous to leave the house.

Mr. Reimer was converted during our evangelistic work in the city of Ekaterinoslav, and immediately consecrated his young life to the

Lord Jesus Christ. Desiring to join the Tent Mission and help carry on the Lord's work, he entered enthusiastically into the joy of helping others, but had the privilege of serving only a short time in the Master's vineyard before he was called Home. Having been found faithful, we are confident that he was given the "Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."



XX

MARVELOUSLY SAVED

ON Friday, October twenty-fifth, (when Brother Dyck's party started for Doo-bovka,) our group went to a neighboring village—not more than a mile away from that place of fatality.

In the evening we held a glorious meeting where many young, as well as elderly people surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God was working mightily! People were heart-sick, tired and weary from their many hardships, with continual fear of being killed, and were therefore hungering and thirsting for God's Word with its message of peace. Saturday morning, however, it was impossible for us to hold our prospective meetings as a large squad of Mackno's troops, heavily armed, were going from house to house mercilessly pillaging and terrifying the inhabitants of the place.

Some twenty armed men entered the house where I was staying with my missionaries, and wildly flourishing their drawn sabres threatened the terrified inmates, and demanded to see the proprietor of the house. Upon hearing of their arrival he had hastily sought a hiding place.

Feeling a tragedy was imminent, we commenced to sing the strains of a beautiful hymn. This had a quieting influence on the Hun-like

troopers so that they settled down in the room and arranged to take a good rest. Noting the effect of the songs, I opened the Bible and commenced to read and speak to them. Some two hours passed in this manner, until some of the troopers, evidently touched, owned that their present terrible course appalled even themselves, and they intended as soon as possible to leave it; "Though not yet," they echoed, "not until we have destroyed all the rich and established a brotherhood of equality and peace, then we will also live as the Bible teaches. But now, comrade, it is impossible for these are war times."

"You do well to call people to repentance, and personally I have nothing against that," said their superior officer, "yet in some instances you may cross our path, then woe betide! I would counsel you to be careful in your movements!"

Again our hearts were lifted in deep gratitude to God for His merciful deliverance, for after a good rest the soldiers left without molesting anyone.

All the villagers were eager to attend the evening meeting; it seemed as if no one dared to run the risk of staying at home alone. The streets were filled with Mackno's cavalry-men, bent on the wildest carousals. Everyone shuddered when obliged to meet these bloodthirsty, rapacious men, whose dark sinister looks would penetrate the passerby.

The Christian families in the village came to the meeting in a body, and the rest of the people followed as they were anxious to be at the feet of their Creator. The very atmosphere was

tense with the sense of some impending catastrophe.

The meeting place, (or "House of Prayer",) was filled to overflowing, and the service had just commenced when a party of some twelve troopers, (heavily armed) entered the room. After a whispered consultation, they parted and sat down in groups of three at the two exits. The remaining six advanced, and also in groups of three settled themselves on either side of the pulpit. The commanding officer, after a dark and threatening glance over the audience, (and at the author, who was presiding) went out into the corridor.

The audience, as well as our mission workers, all felt that we had reached a terrible crisis. Feeling myself that these men had come to execute us, I lifted my heart in silent prayer to God, asking that He would strengthen me, and give me such a love in my heart for these murderers that in the power of the Holy Spirit the Word of God would soften their hardened hearts.

During our work in the German villages we usually spoke half the time in the German language, but this evening, (owing to the singular circumstances,) we decided to conduct our meeting only in the Russian dialect.

After the opening hymns were sung, (inwardly praying) I took my position behind the pulpit. Looking into the faces of the waiting troopers one could read deadly resolve printed there, and I knew that unless God Himself came to our rescue, this would be my last sermon. Every word of my address, therefore, (directed by the Holy Spirit) applied to the critical situation and was

meant to awaken their sin-hardened consciences.

At the beginning of my message the troopers sat with scornful derision written on their countenances, but gradually God's power was felt, and His Word penetrated and moved their stubborn hearts until their heads drooped, and they looked both troubled and sad.

A mighty call to repentance and loyalty to God, rang out like a trumpet as the sermon continued, while the audience sat spellbound. The missionaries, (who also sat near the pulpit,) were silently praying that the speaker would be given strength for his address, and that God would guide and protect us all in this hour of extreme danger.

The Spirit of God was so apparent as to be almost visible, and not a dry eye was seen in that packed audience. The soldiers, (unable to control their emotion,) one by one went out into the corridor, until only two were left. The glorious and soul-stirring hymn: "There was One who was willing to die on the Cross," rose in sweet and thrilling strains from our small choir of Mission workers. After the last call to repentance there was a perceptible stir through the congregation as the Holy Spirit worked mightily in their hearts. The veil of sin that had separated them from their Creator, was rent in twain. Two of the troopers near the pulpit sat with heads buried in their hands, while the Mission workers were going from one praying group to another, and leading them to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

Recognizing one of the troopers, (whose uncle was a minister of the Gospel, and well known to

me, and whom I had recently seen near the city of Berdjansk) I watched both soldiers closely for a minute. Evidently memory, like a lash, had brought to them visions of the time, (not so long ago,) when as innocent children they had attended religious meetings with their Christian parents, and their young voices had also joined in the sweet hymns of praise, but now, torn from their homes by the ruthless wave of revolution, and having no Christian fellowship, shifting from one party to another, and going down, down, as if on an interminable ladder, sinking lower and lower toward the bottomless pit of moral depravity, and deeper and deeper into sin, they had become demons in human form, thirsting for blood.

Seeing these two young men, if not repentant, were in the depths of despair, I spoke to them. With bitter tears they told me their blood-curdling history: "We are lost, lost forever! We have passed beyond the boundaries of God's forgiving grace. Our deeds, like horrible demons, stand in our way to repentance and peace! They are separating us from God and shutting us out forever from heaven! Blood, blood, a sea of blood cries out for vengeance! As for bloodshed we came here tonight for that purpose. There is no help for us! Even if we did repent and begin a new life, our fellow troopers would shoot us, and if we managed to run away to our homes, the neighbors (knowing the amount of sorrow we have caused) would either lynch us or betray us to the 'Whites.' There is no alternative but to pursue this course until a stray bullet ends our dreadful existence!"

All exhortation, encouragement and entreaty to turn their despairing souls to the One who is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him," in this case were in vain. They arose and walked out into the corridor, and I followed them, but meeting the superior officer of this detachment, and seeing him, I stopped short. To my great surprise he walked toward me with friendly mien, and said "You do not know me, but I listened to one of your sermons in the town of Pologi, some eighteen months ago, before I joined Mackno's army. You have changed so terribly I only knew you by your voice, but I am glad I recognized you in time—you are lucky too," he concluded, with a world of meaning in his words.

We heard afterwards that they had come to the meeting firmly resolved to slay the missionaries first, and then kill every living soul in the building. Only God's timely intervention had turned them from their purpose of carrying out our sentence of death.

The lifted sword was stayed and quietly returned to its scabbard—by Him who hath said: "Thus far shalt thou come, but no further."



XXI

SAVED AGAIN FROM THE ASSASSIN'S HAND

HOW vividly every detail of that memorable Sunday morning stands out in my memory! Grave excitement, and many sad experiences, were crowded into that distressing day!

As I was on my way to our morning meeting, I saw, (coming in my direction,) a wagon drawn by a team of horses. Coming nearer, I saw two old men who looked demented, in the midst of some household goods which were thrown together in the wildest confusion. They looked around, (fear and terror stamped on their faces) as if they were seeking a hiding place. It was quite evident that they had been through some terrible experience which seemed to have affected their reason.

Going up to them I inquired from whence they had come, and what had happened? They shrank back, but said: "Blood! Blood! All are killed!" Unable to learn any more from them I turned about and saw another wagon coming from the same direction. When I approached this party, the driver stopped, so I again inquired what had happened?

The people, still trembling and terrified, replied: "All the men in our village were merci-

lessly murdered last night. They killed all the men in a group of missionaries first, and took the ladies prisoners; then killed the rest of the men!"

The awful news of the tragic death of Brother Dyck and his group of men was so unexpected that it seemed unbearable; then to think that something worse than death might have befallen the lady workers, at the hands of those furious and beastly soldiers, filled our hearts with unspeakable anguish!

After prayer and counseling with my group of co-workers, I decided to go at once to the place of murder, and, if possible, rescue our Sisters. Miss Sara E., (a member of my group,) was willing to accompany me, suggesting that it might be less dangerous to travel in company with a woman.

One of the Christians still possessed two old horses, (which the soldiers had left in place of good ones,) and these we gratefully accepted to help us on our journey.

It was a foggy autumn day, and the roads were almost impassable with deep and sticky mud, which clung so tightly to the wheels that the poor animals had hard work to pull the vehicle. The town of Doobovka (which we were approaching) was in a valley and wrapped in fog, adding to the gloomy aspect. The streets were deserted and quiet, but overhead large flocks of crows were soaring after their bloody feast. Nearing the town we heard the piteous cries of hungry cattle and fowl; otherwise there was not a sound of life in the place. Even the clouds seemed to grow darker and darker as they covered that misty valley of death.

Then we noticed near one of the houses a woman hiding behind a corner. She was weeping bitterly. Seeing us, she waved with a white handkerchief, making signs for us to come to her. As we approached, she exclaimed: "For God's sake turn back! Drive away before you are seen! All the inhabitants of this town are massacred; and if the murderers see you they will not hesitate a moment to kill you!" Inquiring if she could tell us anything about our missionaries, she replied: "They are all killed! Not one is left! Yesterday afternoon they were the first ones to be slaughtered! I saw them myself after the massacre!"

In spite of this woman's kind warning, we felt that we must continue our investigation and see for ourselves these brave fellow-workers, who were martyred because of their love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. Receiving from the woman the necessary directions, (which proved to be only a short distance away), we started on our way, but suddenly some soldiers on horseback came up to us and demanded in a sharp voice: "Who are you? What business has brought you to this town? Show your identification papers!" After searching my pockets, (where they found nothing but my Bible and my identification papers—which were in it) they were returned with this remark: "Well, well, so you are a missionary too, and have come to see your fellow-workers! I will show them to you right away!" Then with harsh voice he commanded: "Follow me at once!"

Anticipating his purpose, I replied: "Anything you want to do to me, do it right here! I

will not leave this place! It cannot make any difference to you where you shed human blood—in the middle of the street or in a dark place; but I must tell you that God sees all your wicked deeds no matter where they are committed.”

Giving me a terrible look of concentrated fury he tore his sabre from its scabbard, and lifted it over my head; but before it fell—that very moment, another soldier galloped to our side, and stopping his horse, yelled: “Halt, comrade! Spare him, I entreat you, for I know this man very well and will not permit anyone to lay hands on him!”

Through God’s marvellous grace the saber sank down, (not on my head—above which it had been suspended but a moment before), but into its scabbard, and the angry soldier, (with a curse) spurred his horse and went on.

My God-sent defender then turned to me and pleaded: “Quickly leave this place. I will not be able to help you after your presence is made known to our staff!” Asking permission to see our workers, he added: “The missionaries who were here are all massacred, no one is alive! They cannot return, therefore it is useless to try and see them. Leave this place as soon as possible or the same thing will happen to you!”

During these tense moments, our missionary, (Miss Sara E.) was sitting by my side, with bowed head and clasped hands, pleading with God, (our Father and Protector) to shield and save us, if it was His Holy will. Graciously, mercifully, and speedily He answered. We hurried away from this dangerous ground, and safeguarded by our Heavenly Father, safely returned

to the place where our co-workers were anxiously awaiting our return.

The soldier (whom the Lord sent at the right moment to save us from death) was none other than the commanding officer, who the day before had appeared at our lodgings, with his troopers, and had demanded to see the master of the house, whom they intended to kill; but after they had rested awhile, and I had read to them portions of the Bible about the atoning Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, they went to Doobovka and participated in the massacre.



XXII

A SAD REUNION

TWO of our groups came back to Nicolai-pol at the appointed time, but one division failed to come. The founder of the Tent Mission, and our beloved president—together with the workers who had accompanied him, did not return. This reunion of the surviving missionaries was the saddest moment of their lives!

Entering the yard of the house, where Mrs. Dyck and her baby had been staying during these days, we saw her standing in the doorway. "Where is Jacob? What has happened? Is it true?" she inquired in a voice filled with anguish. We were not able to answer, but one gave an affirmative nod. She knew—and without another word went into the house. God alone knows what our dear Sister suffered, but "the God of all comfort" sustained and helped her to bear her unspeakable loss.



XXIII

A FALSE REPORT AND THE GRUESOME SCENE OF DEATH

ALL members of our Mission band were broken down from physical exhaustion, (and even more from the heart-breaking experiences through which they had passed;) but as if to add to our suffering came the report that all the members of Brother Dyck's group had been massacred, with the exception of himself; instead he had been taken prisoner, conducted to the city of Ekaterinoslav, where Mackno's staff was stationed.

Hearing this I decided to go once more to the place where the murder had been committed. To prevent being held up again, (as I was the first time) I left the horses in the nearest village and walked over. A Christian man from this village accompanied me. He took me through orchards to the place where our dear ones were still unburied. No one dared to go to Doobovka to bury the many who had been slain. All the inhabitants had left the place the night of the massacre.

Avoiding the streets, we quietly made our way around the various out-buildings of the property owners. At every place shocking sights were presented to our view. Near each place we saw two or three dead men lying around.

Close to one house we saw a middle-aged father, (and his four grown-up sons) who had been killed by the sword. Their faces revealed deep gashes made by the sword. It seemed as if the one who had committed all these murders had disfigured the handsome faces of their victims as much as possible. It was as if these wholesale murderers could not bear the sight of a human face, so mutilated them as much as they possibly could. Of all the eighty people slain that night not a face was left unmarred. There was indeed something very strange about it all!

Having seen so many harrowing sights, (and possibly becoming more accustomed to it) we approached the place where our martyred co-workers were lying. A low, wide door led into a dimly lighted barn, where I saw their mutilated bodies lying in pools of frozen blood.

Some of them were in a praying attitude, showing that their last breath had been spent in prayer. It was extremely difficult to identify any of them as their faces had been hacked beyond recognition. This was especially true regarding the face of Brother Dyck, whose countenance was just one mass of raw bloody flesh. The only way I could identify him was by his form and his underwear, which bore his name. All his other clothing had been removed and taken away.

It was altogether too dangerous to tarry in this place, (even for a few moments) it was also impossible to take the bodies out and bury them, for the communists continued to come to the village and killed every one whom they found there.

Having established the fact that Brother Dyck was not a prisoner at Ekaterinoslav, I looked once more upon my dear co-workers, and silently praying to God, returned with my companion to the village where I had left my team. In due time I arrived safely at Nickolaipol, where the rest of the Mission workers were staying.

The report that Jacob J. Dyck had been taken alive to Mackno's headquarters, came from a man who knew Mr. Dyck. Although he had been to the place where Mr. Dyck had been killed, he failed to recognize him because of the terrible disfigurement of his face. A week or more after that the corpses were all buried in one grave by the peasants of the surrounding country.

The rough and thorny way of the missionaries, (which led to a martyr's death) was still a blessed way, because through their work many lost souls were brought to the Lord Jesus Christ, who abundantly saved them.

To those of us who remained, their loss was so unexpected that it seemed altogether unbearable. Mr. Jacob J. Dyck and Mr. Oscar Ushkevitch, (both in the prime of life and at the meridian of their ministry) were our two most self-sacrificing and consecrated workers.

In losing Mr. Dyck the Mission lost its most gifted and talented worker. He was not only the organizer and president of the Mission, but he was also friend and brother to all his co-workers. His life was an example and an inspiration to all with whom he came in contact. This was a loss none of us could understand, and often caused us to ask the question: "Why?"

Afterward, with clarified vision, we saw that having finished the work God had given them to do, He had called them to their rest and reward. Each one had reaped his field; laid down his sickle, and had gone to be with the Lord of the Harvest. Each one had faithfully used the talent given to him by the Lord.

Brother Dyck, gifted more than the others, accomplished much although he lived but a short time. He was like a candle, which lighted at both ends gives out more light, but is more quickly consumed.



XXIV

TRIUMPHANT BEARING OF THE CROSS

S EVEN of our number were dead, and two were seriously ill with typhus fever. The rest of us remained another ten days at Nickolaipol; but every day was fraught with new dangers, as Mackno's troops came daily into the village plundering and robbing, even taking clothing and footwear from some of our workers. One frosty morning, Mr. Shafran (a Jewish convert) was accosted on the street by the troopers, and ordered to remove his boots. He had to hand them over and proceed on his way bare-footed through the snow.

Before our co-workers were slain we did not fear the threats of the communists, but from that time on, (due partially, perhaps, to our overwrought condition,) we dreaded their approach. Previously we had lodged in various homes but now we planned to stay together as much as possible.

One morning, when it was still very early, I was awakened by a cry for help from the adjoining chamber, where our sister workers slept. Hastily dressing, I rushed to the room. A number of soldiers had entered the room and were gathering up their personal belongings. I entreated them to leave the ladies their clothing, which they finally did, but one of them said:

"Your overcoat has taken my fancy and I will take that," then roughly he tore it from my shoulders.

"Friends," I entreated, "please give me back my overcoat; it is the only warm garment I possess. This is winter time and we have to journey from place to place." The coat had been kindly given to me during our stay at Ekaterinoslav by a Jewish Christian. It was his only coat and considerably worn out too, but he gave it to me with these words: "I live at home and can winter without a warm coat, but you have to journey from place to place and would suffer from the cold; so do take it as from the Lord."

I took the coat to a tailor who renovated it, and now when winter was setting in, and I had barely had it for a month, I ran the chance of losing it. It was impossible to buy another, as all the shops were either pillaged or burnt. No marvel then that I begged the soldier to return my coat to me, but he turned on me with a furious oath, and said: "You have no right to utter a word of protest! You must, without a word give up anything we ask for; if not, we will quickly dispose of you as counter revolutionists. Everything belongs to the people in common, and anyone who violates this rule should be killed!

"But my friend," I began, "surely if I beg you to leave me my old overcoat I do not violate any of your principles! If everything belongs to the people, then surely I have a right to my coat, especially when you have a good warm fur one!"

"I will show you what is right," he yelled,

snatching his sabre from its scabbard; "you who preach of God are all servants of Capital! You have had your share and have no rights in our proletariat country. We will kill you all! Never fear, your turn is coming! And now, not another word from you, I want your coat and that's the end of it!"

Throwing my coat over his shoulders, (above his heavy fur coat) and flourishing his sabre in the air, the whole party finally left the house.

That same day, (when we gathered together for prayer,) another soldier entered the house, and without any ceremony started opening the drawers of the dressers and buffet, taking whatever pleased his fancy.

"You are all praying in here, you servants of Capital," said the communists. Turning upon us, (revolver in hand) he continued: "Ministers often have lots of money, so fork over yours!" Without any discrimination, he began searching everyone. Coming to me, he found my watch. "Oho", said he, "you have a watch, eh? How many years have you had it?" "Three years," I answered. "Good, I will now have it for the next three years," said he; and without further ado pocketed my property.

From this concise account it can readily be seen that each succeeding day left us poorer and poorer; our top coats, (every bit of extra clothing) and our footwear went into the merciless clutches of these ruthless pillagers. In place of shoes we were now obliged to wear wooden sandals, and walk in these through mud, slush and snow, but, at least, they afforded some protection for the soles of our feet.

Difficulties and dangers daily increased, making the continuation of our work more and more hazardous.

Two days later the highest commanding staff of Mackno's army arrived in Nickolaipol. I decided to seek a personal interview with Mackno, although this procedure was naturally fraught with great danger.

After earnest prayer for guidance and protection, I departed, accompanied by Mr. B. who had but lately joined our missionary party. It was a dull cold day when we started forth, and a drizzling rain added to general gloom. About ten o'clock in the morning we approached the building occupied by the staff. A number of armed soldiers met us, and cast dark, suspicious looks upon us, but after a careful examination led us into the commandant's office. Mackno himself was absent, but we were received by his assistant, who (heavily armed) sat at a table on which (among a litter of papers) lay two vicious looking revolvers. This man looked most formidable. He gave us a threatening look as we approached. Instinctively his hand closed on one of the revolvers, while behind us stood his guard of heavily armed soldiers.

It was evident that although we were at their mercy, they feared and trembled for their own lives. We were truly as men facing ferocious beasts, yet through it all the Lord gave perfect peace and calm.

Putting my identification before him, I requested that he would give me a written order for protection against further violence and pilage from the soldiers.

This seemed to fill him with amazement as well as fury. "What, you ask for a written order for protection in this time of ruthless extermination of all parasites," he exclaimed. "You can protect yourselves as you like, but do not cross our line of vision again!"

"I am only surprised that all of your class were not shot long ago," he added, with a wicked look pointing his pistol at me.

Quietly I inquired: "Will you kindly tell me where I can find your leader—Mackno? A few months ago I had a personal interview with him, and he said that we could preach the Gospel anywhere and whenever we wished. If I could see him I think he would still be of the same opinion and grant my request."

"Oh yes, I have no doubt he would use an ounce of lead to give you immediate transportation, free of charge, to your paradise," was the assistant's none too encouraging comment.

Seeing that it would not improve matters to use more words, we gave a brief testimony regarding the love and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for sinners, and departed. We realized now that the commanding staff was fully cognizant of all that had happened to us, as well as the death of Brother Dyck and his party. It was, therefore no undesigned act, but one premeditated and carefully carried out. The same sentence had also been passed upon us, and we might expect death at their hands any moment; but we were still at peace knowing that without the will of God, not a hair of our heads would fall.

During all this period, in spite of trials, diffi-

culties and manifold privations, we continued our work for the Lord, and every day held two meetings in the neighboring colonies. Large crowds gathered to hear the Word of God, and even through these hard days of physical exhaustion and suffering, the Master's presence was very real as He glorified His name by manifestly blessing the work.

Many souls in these settlements found peace at Calvary's cleansing fountain.

It was a blessed day when Brother Dyck's widow, after she had laid her great personal sorrow and loss at the feet of her Lord, again took up her work, as before, in our midst, with her nine months old fatherless child.

At length we decided to move on before the winter should set in in all its severity. Therefore, despite the entreaties of believers that we stay on for awhile, we were firm in our purpose to go on to the Mennonite settlement at Halbstadt, which was some two hundred miles distant.

We experienced some little difficulty in getting a couple of teams to convey us to the nearest village, which was about sixteen miles away, as no one wished to venture forth as drivers; but again the Lord rallied to our aid as two of our Christian friends finally decided to take us over.

After a most blessed farewell meeting, we left Nickolaipol, but were obliged to leave behind two sick workers and one of the sisters to look after them. We duly arrived at our destination, (Shirokoje) without any mishap.

A few days later we learned that only a few hours after our departure from Nickolaipol a

fierce and wild squad of Mackno's soldiers stormed the place seeking for us. Before leaving they robbed the inhabitants taking the horses and vehicles that remained, and perpetrating violence and pillage of every description. Fortunately the two drivers who had decided to bring us over, had thus been saved from violence, neither did their teams fall into the hands of the cruel soldiers.

More and more we realized that our Heavenly Father was to be glorified in the death of some, as well as in sparing the lives of others. Surely "His ways are not our ways."

At Shirokoje we found a large and blessed field of labor. This place was also directly under Mackno's rule. In every home were a number of soldiers quartered, either wounded or ill with typhoid fever. In view of this alarming fact the disease was fast spreading over the whole community.

The five days of our stay here passed in continual work. Every day we held a few meetings, visited the sick, and held blessed discourses with souls who were seeking salvation. The result was a wonderful harvest of souls for Christ in this settlement and adjacent ones. Many of these new converts passed into eternity in a few weeks, either by epidemic or by the sword.

It seemed as if at the eleventh hour God had sent us to show them the way into His Heavenly kingdom.

Brother Dyck's close associate and helper was also stricken with the disease. This was an especially hard blow for me as he was one of the

four leading men of our Mission (two already having been taken) so that now the leadership of the whole Mission work was delegated to me, the only one remaining.

Finishing our work at Shirokoje, we changed our route somewhat and went on toward Voronzovka, (lying on the banks of the Dnieper river.) Our route across this river via Chortitza now appeared to be cut off by Mackno's army, who held a strong position in the so called "Dnieper's pocket." On the opposite banks was Denikin's army, and there was almost continual shell fighting going on.

Longingly we gazed at the opposite shore, which if attained would take us out of Mackno's reach; but it was God's will that we should yet abide some time in this "valley of the shadow of death."

Not wishing to leave our sick friend and worker behind, we took him along with us when we left Shirokoje, but in the next German village we were obliged to leave him as he was then altogether too ill to be moved. His sister stayed to nurse him, but during his convalescence she also contracted the disease, and for some weeks was dangerously ill.

We went on and visited a number of villages and small towns where we held blessed evangelistic meetings along the way. Again the Holy Spirit worked mightily and many souls turned to Christ.

At length we reached the town of F., which we chose to be our present center. Forming into two small groups, we passed a full week working in this town and neighborhood. The

Lord graciously manifested His saving grace among this German and Russian population where the divine fire from on high melted hardened and frozen hearts. Especially was the power of the Holy Spirit evident when two fine young men surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. They had both made a solemn vow to avenge their wrongs and get even with their enemies who had caused their families, as well as themselves untold suffering and woe. But after attending our meetings the Lord opened their eyes, and they realized that before God they were also sinners and needed a Saviour. As the Spirit of the Lord continued to work in their hearts, their consciences did not give them any rest, but it seemed as if Satan was holding them in his fetters.

After attending our first meeting, the two young men met and intimated that the force of the sermon had greatly disturbed them, but again renewing their oath they both agreed to keep away from the meetings, and also promised that one would not do anything without informing the other of it. The next evening, however, one of the young men was again present. Under the force of God's message of salvation, many souls under deep conviction of sin came home to their Creator. One of the Mission workers, (noticing the terrific struggle in the heart of this young man) went to him and offered to pray with him and for him, but he refused. He was now bound by two vows: to avenge all the wrong that had been done to him and his family, and the other to do nothing without the knowledge of his friend.

We closed the meeting, and the new converts, as well as the other Christians, went home rejoicing in the Lord, but the struggle between God and satan was still going on in the heart of this young man. Coming home, his mother (who was a consecrated Christian) pleaded with him to give his heart to Jesus, but in vain! The Holy Spirit was pleading too, but the flesh protested. A voice seemed to whisper in his ear: "Be a man now. You have made a vow, do not be a coward, but keep it. Just think what evil has been done to you and your family, be a hero and avenge it! You know that if you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and are converted, you can never fulfill your vow! Then your friend, what is he going to think of you? You have given your promise to him, surely you will be man enough to keep it."

It was already two o'clock in the morning, but the words spoken by the missionary the evening before was still ringing in his ears: "Today or never. Our lives are not in our own hands, we are living in days of danger and peril, death is following us by day and by night. Come to Jesus, O give your heart to One whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin. Let us trust Him even though these bodies of ours may have to die. The Lord is speaking to you tonight. To put off your decision until tomorrow is a suggestion from the evil one. Do not listen to him for he was a liar from the beginning."

"Yes, 'today' now, right now!" came from the pale lips of the young man as he fell upon his knees to get right with God, unable any longer to withstand the pleadings of His Holy Spirit.

From the depths of a full heart came a sincere prayer for forgiveness of sin as he knelt there at the Throne of grace. His mother, hearing him pray, softly opened the door and quietly sank on her knees at his side, and both, (mother and son) poured out their hearts in gratitude to God for such a wonderful salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gone was the pride and the fear of what his friend might say. The enmity and desire for vengeance had also disappeared, and in its place had come an overwhelming love for God and a desire to testify to what the Saviour had done for him. Though it was two o'clock in the morning, he put on his overcoat and went immediately to see his friend that he might tell him that the Lord Jesus Christ had cleansed him with His precious Blood, and changed his heart completely. A great fear came over him as he thought: "If my friend should die tonight, without the peace of God in his heart he will be lost forever."

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, he went on, and was met with the inquiry: "What is the matter with you? Why do you disturb the whole house at this hour of the night? Have the bandits come again? Why should they rob at night when they have full liberty to go around by day-light? What has happened? Have you met with an accident? Tell me quickly!"

"Oh, no, no robbing and no accident this time", he replied, "but a great joy has come into my heart, and I just had to come and tell you right away. I have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, and He has forgiven all my sins!"

"Are you mad?" was the angry reply of his sleepy friend. "Where is your vow and your promise, now you will even betray me!"

"Nay, nay, calm yourself and let me tell you all about it, and then perhaps we may both be benefited through this."

Their talk extended late into the morning hours, and the result was that the young man, his heart enlightened by the Spirit of God, accepted Christ as his Redeemer and Friend. Energetic, educated and talented these young men, (who had known the Bible from their early childhood) now consecrated their lives to the Lord. They helped us faithfully in our Mission work, and expressed a desire to join our forces the coming spring, D. V.

God's blessing rested upon our work, but our ranks grew thinner and weaker; out of the thirty-five workers who had started out in the spring to sow God's Word among the people, there remained only fifteen. Five, ill with typhus fever, had been left behind, together with three others to take care of them; six had been slain, (besides Mr. Shellenberg, who—although not a regular member of our Mission Party, had joined us for a time.) Others had taken their departure early in the fall to resume teaching. We divided again but agreed to meet at Karpatskoje in a fortnight. We took different routes, and my group was to visit a number of outlying Russian villages. The other division, under the leadership of Brother P. L., (who was a Hebrew Christian, and had joined our Mission at Ekaterinoslav) was to visit a number of German settlements and lonely Russian hamlets. Both groups

experienced much joy and blessing in their work, and left a train of happy converts in their wake.

The village of Karpatskoje was our next objective, lying by the banks of the Dnieper river. Here we hoped (by the aid of the resident believers) to cross the river and then continue (some 120 verst) to the homes of a number of our workers in order to recuperate health, as well as to prepare for the next season's work. In this haven we hoped to pass some of the winter months. The believers at N. with many tears accompanied us far outside the village. It was certainly hard to leave these precious souls, and before we took our departure we knelt in prayer and committed them to the care and protection of our Heavenly Father. Getting into our vehicles we slowly proceeded on our way.

It was a cold, gloomy November day, and a drizzling rain was falling. The roads were almost impassable for mud stuck to the wheels in such quantities that instead of turning, they simply dragged like sleigh runners. The poor horses, hitched four abreast to each vehicle, could scarcely make any headway at all. In spite of the warm clothing—so generously provided by our kind friends at Nickolskoje, we felt very cold. To get off and walk, in an effort to keep warm, was also impossible on account of the loose slush and mud; and to make matters worse, a number of our workers had contracted typhoid fever, and could hardly sit up. Not wishing to add to our sadness they bravely fought against a total collapse.

It was very dark when at last, our thirty verst drive nearly finished, we neared our desti-

nation. Before us still lay a very deep valley, a half frozen stream at it's bottom. As we descended the darkness grew so impenetrable that I was forced to get off the wagon and lead the horses. We had just crossed the stream when I was nearly knocked down by a swiftly descending line of wagons. Hastily turning our teams a little out of the way, we found that we had been caught in the wild retreat of Mackno's army. We were afterwards informed that they had just suffered a sharp defeat from the "Whites", and like infuriated beasts were fleeing pell-mell with wagons, supplies, horsemen, guns, carriages and everything in one wild confusion of flight.

All the streets were crowded with their supplies and teams, so for us who were travelling in the opposite direction it was almost impossible to proceed. Through God's gracious leading, however, we had entered one of the small side streets. Here we tried to find some Christian homes where we might take refuge, for we knew perfectly well if we were recognized the soldiers would make short work of us.

In the black darkness God extended His protecting hand over us so that the soldiers mistook us for their own company, to which fact we owed our lives.

"How did you get into this street?" questioned one. "From what squad are you?" "Why are you driving in the opposite direction?" came the questions from the driver of the nearest wagon. "It is so narrow here that we cannot pass unless we smash through the wall!" Cursing he sought to drive his team forward. Rising to the situation, I called to him in answer, saying: "Com-

rade, talking won't get us anywhere. Where you and we are quartered we'll speak about tomorrow when it is light, but now we must give one another passage, otherwise we will stand here in the mud and rain until daylight. Turn your team into that gateway and then we will be able to clear the way for you. Wait, I will help you!" I took hold of the horses' heads, turned them into the gateway of a large yard, and the three remaining teams of Mackno's men followed, and thus our way was clear. We hastily drove ahead with deep gratitude to God for our miraculous escape.

During my conversation with the soldier, our whole party had kept perfectly quiet, but were silently committing our case to God.

A few minutes more and we found a Christian family who joyfully welcomed us. Hardly had we unhitched our exhausted horses, and gone in to warm ourselves by the primitive oven of that peasant home, when three of Mackno's horsemen also turned into the yard and demanded sleeping quarters for themselves and accommodation for their horses. Under pressure of fear the house-holder was obliged to obey.

We were indeed a queer combination in that small peasant cottage: our party, (ill and weary,) the peasant's family, and lastly these three rough soldiers.

In spite of weariness, and the danger of incurring their displeasure, I opened my Bible and began to talk to them about Jesus. Our conversation continued until past midnight. Under the power of God's Word the soldiers confessed that they had done wrong, and began to

relate some of the blood-curdling crimes they had but recently committed.

"When retreating from the 'Whites' one night, we set fire on all sides of a lovely populous German village lying in our path. As the unfortunate victims, (men, women and children) fled from that red inferno to hide in the orchards and woods we galloped after them and mercilessly slashed and hacked them to pieces with our sabres. We could easily see them by the bright light the devastating conflagration made."

After a moment's pause, he again picked up the threads of his hair-raising narrative.

"We rushed into the homes, not yet touched by the fire, and massacred all the inmates. In one house we found a family of six: husband, wife and four children crouching in the kitchen. We dragged them into the main room of the house, and—well"—he paused, then went on: "When we were through they were all a mutilated, quivering, bloody mass in the center of the room, but it seems that one of the children (a ten year old girl) had hidden. When we left she crept out of her hiding place to look for her mother, but when she saw the terrible sight in the living room, she gave one wild piercing shriek. We heard it, and I ran back to kill her. When I opened the door, I saw the child in that room of death, stretched out on that bloody heap embracing it. Her head was thrown back, and her wild fixed gaze attested to the fact that she had lost her reason. I raised the sword, but lost my nerve and rushed out of the house. I sent my friend in, but he could not kill her, so we set fire to the house and burned her alive."

His horrible tale ended. The soldier continued to gaze darkly at the floor. Recalling such scenes was evidently discomfiting even to themselves, while to us who were confined in the same room with these ruthless criminals, it was almost unbearable to have to listen to their murderous tales. The involuntary cry of our hearts was: "O God, to what depths have Thy creatures fallen!"

After a moment's pause, I turned again to the narrator, and said: "Pray tell me what was the reason for all this horrible violence and bloodshed? What had those people done against you? What were your feelings when you mercilessly hacked to pieces men, women and innocent children? What would you think if someone should slaughter your parents, your wives and your own children? How will you answer for all this to God who alike created you and your victims, giving life to all? Think you He will not call you to account for all this innocent blood which you have shed? Like the blood of righteous Abel, theirs also calleth to God for vengeance, and sometime, sooner or later, all—yourselves included—will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account of all we have said and done while in the body."

One of the soldiers sighed deeply, and said: "You are right, Comrade, such acts are worse than beastly; they are fiendish! The most ferocious beasts could not have acted worse; but we never realized what we did. Afterwards some feelings of pity and sorrow came into our hearts, but it was then too late! If there had been someone amongst us at those moments

to have spoken a few quiet, reasonable words to calm us, it might have been different! For instance: I do not know what possesses me, (and others will tell you the same) but in those moments of blood-shed there is neither pity, nor thought of the consequences, but only the thirst for blood, and still more blood; although now I can speak, and think and reason."

"Not long ago," he began again, "we massacred a group of people similar to your group here. Why we did it no one can tell! True, we did not like the way they reminded us of sin, punishment, death and eternal life; but they never did us any harm. In fact they were always very good to us in those days when we were hated and feared by all. There are two soldiers in our company who cannot yet forgive themselves for their part in that murder because, even when the blood was spurting from their wounds, they continued to pray for us asking that we might turn to the Lord and be forgiven. That massacre of a Mission group gave us such downright remorse that we started drinking to drown the voice of conscience. But maddened by drink we fell lower still. We are often horrified by our own acts and wonder when all this will have an end. I suppose that death in some form will take us. I recall the time, (not more than eighteen months ago) when I often attended evangelistic meetings, and heard much about sin, repentance, life, death and salvation. I really wanted life eternal, but I did not want to break with sin. Once when the minister gave the altar call, I heard the Spirit's call to accept the Lord and surrender my life to Him, but I

did not heed it. Some of my friends were saved that night. Plenty of time, I said to myself, I am still young. That was only eighteen short months ago, but now it is too late! A demon has taken possession of me and is forcing me downward! There is no escape for me!"

The speaker became silent. It was now past midnight. All the members of my party were fast asleep after the day's exhaustion. Wherever their weary and frost-chilled bodies could find space on the clay floor of that one room farm house, there they lay. A deep sorrow and compassion for their lost souls filled my heart after listening to the last narrator. Hearing his confession, (as I had heard so many before,) I was more and more convinced that many of these murderers had been brought in the days gone by, within reach of the truth of the Gospel as they visited evangelistic meetings, and some were even children of Christian parents. Some of the principal participants in the massacre of our missionaries, (though now gone far astray) had evidently formerly belonged to a Christian church for they were heard using the language of the Bible as they spoke in the German tongue.

Meeting these people I often thought that they belonged to that class of whom our Lord Jesus Christ said: Their house had been emptied, swept and garnished, but not occupied by Christ, so an unclean spirit, with seven others more wicked than himself, had taken possession. This truth was the only solution that I could find to explain their cruelty and violence.

It was very hard for our flesh to have daily contact with these people; but our spirits were

rejoicing and strong in the Lord. When we saw the depth of sin, like a sea, around us, and death following with its sharp sickle, our hearts were filled with a great desire to witness for the Lord Jesus and to tell those around us that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The following day was a most trying one, with danger lurking on every hand so that it was impossible to hold any meetings, but we did talk with the soldiers who came to our lodgings and tried to lead them to Christ.

One Christian, who came from another city, when walking on the street was seized, taken to the court where Mackno's inspector was stationed, and quickly cut to death by swords. To leave the house meant to meet death.

Night was falling; our visitors had dispersed. The last rays of light were fast fading from the dark somber sky; the dark forms of Mackno's horsemen ever and anon flitted, like the specter horsemen of death, down the shadowy street. The low, scarcely audible moans of our sick workers, (who for want of better accommodations were lying on the flat top of the large Russian clay oven) struck my ears. My head sank on my hand as I sat with my open Bible before me, while a deep voiceless prayer rose to heaven from my surcharged soul. My meditation, however, was of short duration; the door suddenly opened and in strode a heavily armed young cavalry commander, who was tall, straight and handsome. This young man was commander of one of the marauding armies and known among them as "Jashka."

"Halt! Hands up!" he cried. I obeyed, and looked into the barrel of his revolver which he had pointed at me. In spite of his outward bravado, he appeared nervous and uncertain at sight of an unknown personality, garbed in clothes of military colors.

"Who are you? Why are you here?" he questioned. My answers evidently satisfied him. He then looked at my passport and papers, (which he had pulled out of my pocket) also looked through my Bible, and finally gave me permission to lower my hands, which I had been holding up according to orders.

"Who else is here with you? Where are they?" He turned nervously toward our sick members. Mrs. Dyck, slowly rising, presented her papers. The officer glanced at her attentively: "Oh, I know you well enough," he said in excellent German, with a peculiar derisive and malignant smile on his face.

From various sources we learned that he was one of the party who had slain her husband. His present visit, however, was nothing more formidable than a search for suitable night quarters for his men. For this we were certainly most thankful as this officer was known far and wide for his fierce cruelty and demoniacal passions, which held even the soldiers under his command (coarsened and calloused as they were by crime) in fetters of fear.

Shortly after his departure three soldiers came in to stay for the night. One of the party—an officer—was evidently stricken with typhoid fever, half reclining on a bench, he closed his eyes and a look of pain settled on his face.

Seeing these fallen and polluted souls before me, I opened my Bible and read and spoke to them of God and Christ. They listened attentively, especially the sick officer, from whose surcharged bosom ever and anon came deep and grievous sighs.

Turning to me at length, he said: "If you please, Comrade, continue your reading. I will listen. In my whole life I have never heard anything like this regarding Christ and salvation, do proceed." I obeyed, and my message continued until long past midnight. Finally my listener fell into a deep, exhausted and fevered sleep.

Later I felt someone rousing me from a quiet and dreamless sleep, which seemed to have enveloped me. Opening my eyes, I saw the hollow, fevered eyes of the sick officer looking into my face. "It is still early," he whispered, "Nobody is stirring, but I cannot sleep. What you said last night haunts me. Excuse my importunity, but I want you to read and explain it all to me again, the time is so short!" He settled back on the bench, and raising himself on his elbow (tears coursing down his face) he eagerly followed every word as I spoke to him of the Saviour—who died for lost humanity, and of God, the Father, whose name is love.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when special orders were received from the Commanding Staff to mount and hastily continue their retreat. The soldiers quickly prepared for departure. The sick officer, with evident effort, arose and drew on his boots, military cloak, then adjusted his weapons. I would have spoken a last word to him, but in the general hurry this seem-

ed impossible. His companions had already gone when he turned, retraced his steps, and came up to where I was sitting with my Bible in my hand. To my great surprise he laid a fifty rouble bank-note before me, and said in lowered voice: "Accept this, Comrade for yourself and your fellow-workers. You have need of everything. No, no, do not fear to take it, the money is my very own and has not been stained with innocent blood!" A sob broke his voice and tears filled his eyes, but before I could say a word he, too, was gone. The Lord who forgave the repentant thief on the cross, was speaking possibly for the first and last time to this dying soul.

Noting the somewhat quieter atmosphere that day and the following one—we decided to openly hold Gospel meetings, but the attendance was small as the villagers feared to leave the shelter of their home. But a large number of Mackno's soldiers came to listen to God's Word. Our Heavenly Father graciously gave us courage and power to testify to our dark, sinister and murderous audience. We knew that our lives were safe in God's hands, who doth promise: "Not a hair of your head shall fall without the will of your Heavenly Father." We often felt like giving expression to the cry of our hearts in the words of David: "If it had not been for the Lord, who was on our side . . . then they would have swallowed us up;" and our work for the salvation of lost souls would be ended, but God graciously gave strength and protection for each and every day.

On the fourth day of our stay at Karpatskoje, we received the appalling news that our other

group of Mission workers, (for whom we had daily—and anxiously—watched) had been martyred by Mackno's troops in a German village. As the day for our appointed meeting had passed, we were unwillingly forced to admit the possibility of this terrible news.

During these days of bitter hostility from the powers of worldly evil, which were closing in upon us, we felt that we were also doomed, but it was a surprisingly heavy blow to find that it was coming from the little group of Christians.

The news of the massacre of our other group, made them panicky; and fearing a like fate for themselves, (because of their friendship for us,) they gathered one day for a secret consultation as to what was to be done with us. It chanced that I was about to enter the room where they were gathered, when I was arrested by the following words: "I think we had better hand them over to Mackno's forces!" These words struck to my very soul as I realized we were to be betrayed by our friends. This suggestion was followed by others, and finally developed into a resolution, as follows: "Mackno's staff must be requested to dispose of a party of undesirables, whom we neither know nor want, but who have come to our village, taken possession of our homes by force, and are living in them."

Feeling that I had unwillingly heard quite enough, I turned from the door with the words of Peter's denial ringing in my ears: "I know not the man."

Of course we forgave the poor scared people for their resolution, realizing that it had been

done out of sheer terror for themselves and their families; but it clearly revealed that it was extremely dangerous for us to remain longer in that vicinity.

Our physical powers dwindled with every passing day. One of our workers had been laid up for a week with typhus fever, and the others were scarcely able to be on their feet. It was imperative that we should move on at once, but where should we go? Ahead of us, cutting off the way, was the war front of the Macknos and the "Whites." It was now December. The weather was cold and drear, accompanied by snow and rain. We were all very poorly clad because everything warm and serviceable that we had possessed, had long since passed into the hands of the troopers. Our footwear consisted of wooden sandals; these Mackno's soldiers had not taken a fancy to, so permitted us to keep them. There was till one more reason which induced us to run all risks and stay here a little longer, viz., to ascertain the fate of our Mission group, but to drive to the place where they were supposed to be was seemingly impossible, although the distance was not more than twenty verst. No one would risk giving us the use of his team. On the other hand, to go on foot was to meet certain death. The locality was infested by Mackno's cavalry who mercilessly shot down every passing pedestrian, considering them refugees.

At length however, as we were concluding our meeting one day, a stranger approached us and said that he had just managed to come from a neighboring village where he had met a group

of people—like ourselves—who were preaching the Gospel. This news brought to our hearts a glorious ray of hope that perhaps after all our friends were still alive. That same evening, the whole group came to Karpatskoje.

Words are inadequate to express the joy in our hearts at the long looked for reunion! They had also received a report concerning us that we had all been massacred, therefore thought it was not needful to hurry to Karpatskoje on the appointed day of meeting.

Late that evening, together with the believers of the village, we held a glorious meeting. which continued far into the night. Heartfelt prayers of gratitude and adoration ascended to God for all the mercy and blessings bestowed upon us and our work for the Master, for His protection in the midst of danger, and for God-given strength to endure the hardships that both groups had experienced since parting. Brother P. L.'s party had also suffered much, expecting that at any moment they might be called to glorify their Master with a martyr's death. The climax was reached as from a neighboring village came tidings of the monstrous atrocities committed by the troopers during their retreat, as well as the report that we had all been massacred. Naturally they felt then that their own end was merely a question of time. Cancelling their meeting for that evening, they gathered together in one house to encourage one another in the Lord and await the inevitable. "As two groups have already been put to death it only remains now for us to join them," was the consensus of opinion.

Late that winter's night, the silence of the village was broken by unmistakable sounds of the arrival of Mackno's troopers. Wildly and ferociously they burst into people's homes and pillaged them, terrifying the inmates. A number burst into the house where the Mission workers were all kneeling in prayer to God. Taking some things that belonged to them and the householder they left without subjecting anyone to indignities or molestation. This was the last house pillaged that evening. This party proved to be the advance guard, and the commander himself was present in person. Calling all to halt in the street, they waited until the body of the army drew near, then a sharp command was given to march directly through the village without entering any home. Thus not only the Mission workers were wonderfully saved, but the entire village was protected and preserved by God Himself. It was all the more miraculous because the preceding villages (and subsequent ones) were ruthlessly sacked, and many inhabitants had been slain that fatal night.

From the depths of full hearts we thanked God that on this night of our glad and unexpected reunion (as if risen from the dead) He had again preserved us alive; moreover a deeper and more profound gratitude rose up in our hearts because some hundreds of souls had been saved for Christ, as it were—risen from their spiritual death into a new and holy life. Brother L. and his group recounted that in one village all the inhabitants had been converted. Each new convert invited his neighbor to come to the meetings to hear "the blessed news of salvation." The fields

were white for the harvest during those days of trial and hardship, and the Lord richly blessed the work of this tiny handful of Christ's disciples and gave fruit an hundredfold.

After we had read God's Word, and prayed, the rest of that eventful night was passed with but little rest; we leaned on tables and benches, while some reclined on the floor of the cottage and tried to get a little sleep; it seemed however, out of the question. Hour after hour the boom of artillery and the pit pat of machine guns continued without intermission. Desperate fighting was going on. War had again unfolded its lurid drama in the darkness of the night and it became more and more dangerous and turbulent.

Toward morning everything quieted down somewhat. Mackno's cavalry had evacuated the premises. The village of Voronzovka, fourteen verst distant, was now held by the Whites. We were now on mutual ground—or no-man's land, but were visited from time to time by flying patrols of both armies.

This was our chance to escape, so after waiting another day and bidding farewell to our Christian friends, we went on toward Voronzovka. The way was the very perfection of difficulty, discomfort and danger. The roads beggared description; they were one loose mass of black sticky mud! From time to time we were startled by the shriek of a shell as it tore through the air, or the sharp fire of machine guns.

A cold drizzling rain added to the discomforts. Three of our sister workers, ill with typhus fever, lay on the vehicles. Surely

that ride was the last word in hardship for them, but we could not think of leaving them behind at Karpatskoje, which was now the center of the fighting zone. Yet, notwithstanding all these harrowing circumstances, our hearts were light and glad some because many souls had been saved from sin and death. No wonder that the exultant hymn "Joyful, Ever Joyful" rose in one full strain of adoring praise, as we passed through the valley of enmity and death!

Although now there lies between a ten year interval of time, the whole picture, and especially that last journey, stands out with ever distinct clearness in my mind.

The two vehicles sank deep in the mud, while the poor animals could scarcely move them along. The drivers, our ill sister workers, and our belongings were on the wagons, while the rest of us followed on foot in their wake. With greatest difficulty we pulled our feet out of the loose cold mud, but greater and more laborious was progress for Brother Lef with his lame foot, from which he had suffered for many years. His foot simply refused to battle with the unpropitious conditions, nevertheless, with the help of his walking stick, he courageously and painfully labored on, joining his strong voice with the others who were joyfully singing the chorus:

"In His footsteps we will follow,
Nearer to His cross we'll cling."

Tears glistened like jewels in the eyes of many of the workers; tears not of discontent nor of murmuring, but of joy and gratitude to God for

all His blessings, as well as for His mercy and aid.

In the village of Marinskoje, to which we were drawing near, resided a number of believers who were expectantly awaiting our arrival. Hearing faintly the strains of our hymns as we sang along the way, they came out to meet us, and with great joy and gratitude to God received us into their homes.

Here for five days, in various parts of this village, we held almost continual evangelistic meetings, not only all day but sometimes far into the night. Not only was the time spent in religious discourses, praise and prayer, but there seemed to be no end to the questions regarding the way to God from these eager and thirsty listeners.

One could see all around the urgent and pressing need for the message of salvation. Believers were naturally weary and disconsolate after the confusion, pillage and chaos of war, and were sorely in need of exhortation and encouragement. Work, and still more work, lay all around us and we longed to prolong our stay, but physically were nearly at the point of collapse and rest was our great and vital need. However, the result of our short stay in this village were a number of converts.

We were now invitingly near a final deliverance from the menace of Mackno, which like a shadow of death had hung over us so long. If we anced from Mackno menace, which like a shadow could but cross the Dnieper river we would be safe, but at this time of the year navigation at

best was perilous, if not altogether impossible owing to the ice floe. Some of our Christian brethren (hardy boatmen of the village) made an unsuccessful attempt to take us across, and spent almost a whole day in their boats trying to pick out a route around the ice packs to the opposite bank, yet without success for the river defied our passage.

Added to this was the peril from the bank patrol's of both the Mackno and the "White" forces, which fired at the boats that ventured on the river.

These events plainly showed us that the time had not yet come for us to leave this dark vicinity, and that the divine Shepherd wished to gather more precious souls into His eternal fold through the medium of our frail human ministry.



XXV

DELIVERANCE AT LAST

WE had a few more days of blessed work in Marinskoje, resulting in a few more souls finding peace by believing God's Word, repenting of their sins and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Then one evening a party of peasants came from the Dnieper river with the welcome news that at last the river was completely frozen over, whereupon the believers of the village promised to take us down some twenty miles to a village bearing the artistic name of "The Golden Valley", situated on the banks of the river. That locality being somewhat quieter it was hoped that the Christian inhabitants of that place would help us to cross the river as they were experienced rivermen.

Six members of our Mission we were obliged to leave behind at Marinskoje as four of our sister workers were seriously ill with typhus fever, and two others were left to care for them.

One clear frosty morning we took our departure. Two days before there had been a heavy snow fall; but we were kindly provided with warm clothing by our good friends, so that the nine remaining members of our Mission group, (provided with two vehicles) proceeded on their way with comparative comfort.

Before entering Voronzovka we were met by a scouting patrol of Denikin's army, from whom we received more human treatment than by the Mackno troopers.

The believers of Voronzovka prevailed upon us to stay with them for a short time, to which plan we acceded, holding a few meetings in "The House of Prayer" belonging to the Baptist brethren; also an open air service in the market place, where (in spite of the severe cold) an immense crowd gathered to hear God's message. Hearts were so deeply touched that many were in tears.

Truly the harvest was ripe! Ready were the souls to be reaped for Christ! The need for reapers was urgent, but our eight months stretch of Mission work, the many trials, harrowing experiences and tragedy had completely weakened our powers, so that notwithstanding the need of this village we had to continue on our way.

It was the seventeenth of December when we reached "The Golden Valley." The believers of this place also earnestly entreated us to stay a few days with them and hold a number of meetings, but owing to our physical condition we had to refuse them. They finally agreed to let us go the following morning.

Shortly after our arrival the house of the Christian friend (where we were stopping) was filled to over-flowing by a crowd who eagerly besought us to read the Bible to them and tell them about Christ. Even the corridor was thronged. They were as sheep without a shepherd. My heart was filled with compassion and pity for them as I knew in this instance my

strength would not allow me the joy of giving to them the divine truths for which they were eagerly seeking. But, in spite of all, we commenced a meeting, though the remaining members of the Mission would neither sing nor speak—in fact they were unable to sit up and one by one were obliged to lie down. Fever and ague had at last gotten the upper hand!

Holding on to the edge of the table (to keep myself from falling) I delivered a sermon to that eager listening throng, but conversation and prayer with the converts after the sermon (which was always our custom) had to be omitted as I had not a bit of strength left for this special ministry. The crowd before me seemed to sway and merge into one fluctuating mass as the fever worked in my system, consequently I was obliged to retire. Thus the people in this village, who were so hungry for the Gospel, were obliged to remain unsatisfied! May God forgive us!



XXVI

“UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS”

THE swirling currents of the mighty Dnieper were at length stayed by King Winter's benumbing touch, but we were told that it would still be dangerous to attempt to cross it. The river was more than a mile wide, and in many places was yet open—where the current was strong or only thinly coated with ice. However, we decided to venture out because we were in such a sorry plight. Our Brothers and Sisters confessed that it would be easier to go down to a watery grave under the ice of the Dnieper than continue in such a condition.

May my readers be lenient toward our failings and shortcomings, remembering that we were but human and all our powers were enfeebled to the last degree. If it had not been for the continual help of our Heavenly Father we would have long before come to a total collapse. What I have written herein regarding our trials, sufferings, privations, etc., is but a shadow of the actualities.

Early in the morning of December the eighteenth, we descended the steep bank of the river and found ourselves on the rough surface of the ice.

God's care and mercy was again very real

to us, which was exemplified in the fact that one of the believers (an experienced riverman) undertook to guide us across.

With a long ironclad testing pole he went ahead and carefully picked out the route, which we could see was still extremely perilous. He directed us to separate and leave intervals of some twenty-five yards between each person, so that our combined weight would not bear too heavily on any one place at the same time. Thus, one by one, keeping an eye on our guide (with our packs fastened on our shoulders—which added to our weight) we followed on, while every step we seemed to hear the brittle sound of the fatal crack. Mrs. Dyck (our slain Brother's wife—who had shared all our hardships, and helped greatly in the work of the Mission) in turn with the other workers, bearing her infant son in her arms (conscious of her responsibility) quietly and carefully picked her way along that slippery path.

On and on we went, and the bank we left behind seemed to slowly recede further and further away. There stood the brethren who had brought us from Marinskoje (together with a number from our last stopping place) who watched our progress and prayed that we might safely reach the opposite bank, whose snow clad ridge against the azure blue of the sky was rising before us. We had agreed with them that in case we were drowned they were to withhold the news from our ill members (left behind with them) until they had recovered, and then to let them know, giving them our loving farewell, with the blessed assurance that we would be waiting

for them at the Pearly Gate above. If, however, God in mercy should lead us safely across, they were to tell them the glad news as soon as they reached home.

At length the opposite shore stood before us, and as our feet touched it the hymn, "We are over the earthly river" rose in one glad note of thanksgiving from our grateful hearts, then kneeling on the snowy bank we poured out our prayer of gratitude to God for His protection during our perilous passage.

From the opposite bank, in the blue distance, we could faintly see our friends who waved farewell with white kerchiefs.

The first village on the way to Rogatchick lay some five verst from the river, and in spite of sickness and fever we covered the distance as if on wings because of the realization that we were no longer in the power of Mackno (where for months death had daily hung over us) which knowledge was like a life giving tonic. We were a sorry looking group in our wet and frozen clothing as we reached our destination and turned into the yard of a Christian family. Here they played the role of "Good Samaritan" to perfection: each of us was given a complete change of dry clothing; our freezing extremities were rubbed with liniments and we were permitted to go to bed, for a few hours rest, during which time our kind and energetic host obtained a couple of teams and drivers to take us to the German colony of Olgafeld, some fifteen verst inland.

Rest, relief and the timely change to dry clothing brought its favorable results and we all

felt decidedly better. The drive to Olgafeld was easy—even pleasant, and that same evening we held a meeting. The following day, between resting periods, we held several blessed Gospel meetings, which was the beginning of a marvelous period of spiritual awakening in the five neighboring colonies, where great numbers turned to Christ.

Thus God delivered us from the dark menace of communistic murderous intent under which we had labored for some two months.



XXVII

EXTERNALLY OF MANY COLORS BUT THE ONE UNDERLYING SUBSTANCE IN ALL

IN the spring of 1919 I recall how members of various political parties often plied our Mission workers with the following question: "To what party do you adhere? Whom do you favor most—the "Whites", "Reds" or "Blacks"? (the last being anarchists).

One of the missionaries (looking at the questioner with frank pleasantness) gave this reply: "If I could take up in my right hand a "Red" and into my left a "White" or a "Black", and strike them together, the sound would be exactly the same."

During our sojourn with each party we found this simple explanation was held above question. The world (broken up into parties and principalities) perpetually warring against one another, are all in fearful unison warring against God and all of His attributes: (righteousness, goodness and purity). When we were delivered from the "Reds", or Mackno's troopers, we were soon suffering persecution from the "Whites," etc.

From Olgafield to Rueckenau (where we could have our first real rest for a number of days) it was some one-hundred and thirty verst. This dis-

tance we were obliged to cover by travelling from one village to another preaching the Gospel. Some of our workers had homes and loved ones in the colonies not far from Ruckenuau, so naturally had a great longing to get there in time for the Christmas festivities; but the Lord's plan led us elsewhere. There was yet more work awaiting us ere we reached this haven of rest.

Upon arriving at the village of Timoshovka, where dwelt a large number of believers, an unexpected barrier arose which cut us off from our goal, although the distance to Rueckenau was now not more than sixty verst away. It was the formation of a new war front which suddenly confronted us. The "Whites" were retreating to the south and the "Reds" pressing on from the north, consequently no man would dare to drive out into the country, but all kept within the shelter of the villages; moreover the believers of the village, with one voice, begged us to stay with them for the Christmas holidays and conduct services in their village. With great reluctance (and considerable sadness of heart as we thought of Rueckenau) we at length yielded to their importunity and consented to stay. The nearness of home intensified our longing to be there, but we concluded that the Lord had some special ministry for us in this place, therefore humbly beseeched His pardon for our unwilling attitude regarding stopping in this village for the Christmas festivities.

For some twelve years the Christian church in this village had not experienced any spiritual awakening. Not one single soul had come to Christ. Everything was dead and cold; there

existed merely an empty formality of Christianity without any real life or spirituality. And now, in a few days of time, the Lord created nothing short of the wonderful! During the morning service on Christmas day twelve souls turned in repentance to God, imploring forgiveness for their sins. This was but the opening act of what followed in subsequent meetings. The believers themselves awoke as from a torpid sleep. They felt their souls revive and rise—as on Pisgah Heights—to the throne of grace.

Notwithstanding the cold and frost of the season, they would walk from the meetinghouse through the village singing divine songs, which echoed in entrancing strains upon the frosty air, and often they stopped on the streets to give a testimony for their Redeemer. Noting this, the villagers inquired in amazement (one to another): “What dost thou think has come over our Baptists?” “Are they trying to bring everyone to their own faith?”

At last our work here was ended. Many souls had turned to Christ; the believers had been thoroughly awakened from their lethargy and strengthened by attending the meetings as well as from the various religious discourses in their own homes. Every misunderstanding had vanished so that we could proceed on our way in peace.

There remained now only a few more miles to our goal; but difficulties again multiplied which hampered our progress. The severe frosts of the holiday season quickly gave place to thaw; the snow melted and it began to rain. The roads

were again impassable and our most strenuous efforts to reach Halbstadt that day resulted in failure. Total darkness fell, and late that evening (after untold hardships) weary, drenching wet and all plastered with mud, we were compelled to stay in Fishau for the night; but luckily we found a glad welcome and a haven of rest in the home of Brother H. (one of our fellow workers during the summer) who had departed for home earlier in the fall.

After cleaning ourselves somewhat from the mud, and partially drying our clothing, we retired to the beds so kindly provided by our solicitous host. It was about eleven o'clock, when suddenly in the stillness of that winter's night there came the sharp clang of arms, the stamping and snorting of mounts and the sharp sound of military commands. To our great consternation, a few minutes later the door was thrown suddenly open, and our anxious host faced a party of some twenty officers of Denikin's army, who demanded a meal for themselves, at once and sleeping quarters. Ascertaining our presence, the commander instantly ordered us to rise and depart from the village.

The prospect filled us with dismay! It was a dark, wet and cold night; the region was infested with squads of the retreating and pursuing armies, who would shoot us down the moment we stirred from the village; still we were compelled to obey as the officers threatened to shoot us if we remained. Brother H. harnessed a team, and decided to drive with us, so we departed. To drive on to Halbstadt appeared impossible as all villages on the way were occupied

by warring troops. The intention of the officer in ordering our departure amounted to nothing else than a death sentence. Somewhat adverse to slaying us themselves, they sent us out to be met and shot by the scouting parties out in the fields, or else held up and shot as soon as we entered any village along the way.

Fortunately however, Brother H. was well acquainted with that vicinity, and although it was pitch dark, and a cold drizzling rain added to the discomfort of the night, he decided to avoid the main highway and drive along the ways between the fields in the direction of Rueckenau. At length, after what seemed an unending period, the darkness gradually lightened before us, and in the ghostly gray appeared the shadowy silhouettes of a line of buildings. "Thank God!" said Brother H., who during the whole drive had maintained a studious silence: "I trust that is Rueckenau and that we have reached it safely!"

"Halt! or we will fire!" rang out in startling suddenness. Right before us, rising from the ground, appeared a number of shadowy forms. "Stand still, while one of you comes hither, and hold your hands up!" was further ordered. We had, of course, stopped short! I descended from our wagon (careful to keep my hands up) and calmly walked toward the waiting soldiers. These turned out to be the advance guard of the advancing "Red" army which had occupied Rueckenau the previous evening, and had posted its scouting parties outside the village. On one of these we had now stumbled. After taking a look at our papers, they conducted us (under guard) to their head-quarters, whence, after

a strict examination, we were released, the inhabitants confirming our identity.

A few hours later some of our group (and Brother R. in whose home we were now staying) were all called into the office of the military Commander of that vicinity for further examination. Here we were closely questioned as to our identity, the cause of our journeyings, etc. In the long run the examination changed into a veritable Gospel meeting in that military office; with the "Red" soldiers for an audience. We sang a number of hymns, then I read some verses from the Bible and delivered a concise, but pointed address, enjoining my hearers to pause and weigh the issues of life; to repent of their downward course and wash their hands of further violence and bloodshed. When I had concluded we were again released and allowed to depart in peace.



XXVIII

RETROSPECTION

THUS ended our work of the year 1919; ended also was the last nerve racking journey and the last trial in that pitch black winter's night! Now our members could take a real rest, surrounded by those who were near and dear to them in the welcome haven of home. Such happy recalling of incidents and recounting them to others! Such blessed recollections of the unfailing love and protection of our divine Master during all the trials and privations of our evangelistic campaign!

In the whole period of our work, our Mission had numbered thirty-five workers; even in October as we left Ekaterinoslav we were twenty-five in number, and now when we had reached our goal we had only a handful left—just eight souls; all the rest were left behind, some having been slain and the others lying ill of typhus fever.

Hard! very hard was this work; in hunger and cold; in inclement weather; through nerve-racking persecution; in bodily weariness and sickness, accompanied by spiritual despondency; but through all these various scenes the name of our Lord was ever exalted and glorified—even when passing through "The Valley of the shadow of death." Consequently hundreds of human souls

had been rescued from the power of evil, sin and vice. Many of these (soon after their conversion) were destined to pass the gate of death, which presented no terror for them now because it was a mere passing through the gateway to God their Father above. Many of these souls, so dear to their Lord, we shall meet at His throne and hear the eternal praise on their lips.

All our trials and experiences (even the laying down of our lives) counts as naught compared with what God had wrought during these hard and perplexing days. He had sent us as His flying Fire Brigade, to save from the conflagration of sin (which had encompassed our land) the perishing souls of men. True, some in the stern order of things (pointing the lost to the Lord Jesus Christ, who could save their souls) lost their own lives; but He hath said: "He that looseth his life for my sake shall find it." They have not died, but merely laid down their sickles in this earthly life to go to those regions beyond, prepared by God for those who have loved Him and served Him here. They have gone on as conquerors in triumph, conducted by a company of angels to the glory of a martyr's death for Christ! Not many in our days are vouchsafed this privilege and glory!

And what of us who are left behind? Let us lift higher the standard of the Lord; let us hold fast our high calling in Christ Jesus and labor on until we also are called to go to be with Him whose name is Life and Light and Love! Then shall we meet again those our beloved co-workers whose hardships, persecutions and

sufferings we shared here below, as well as all those whose stories we have heard or read, who were faithful to God to the uttermost, and who (in our dark moments) encouraged us by their noble example.

“When we hear the music ringing
 In the bright celestial dome;
When sweet angel voices singing
 Gladly bid us “Welcome Home”
To the land of ancient story,
 Where the spirit knows no care;
In that land of light and glory
 We shall meet each other there.”



XXIX

PREPARATION FOR NEW WORK

THE divinely appointed organizer and leader of the Tent Mission (also some of the other dearly beloved workers) had passed away. Others, (scattered in various directions) lay seriously ill; but courage! Our Lord God Omnipotent reigneth now and evermore! There were yet many unsaved souls in the world! The need of evangelization was still tremendously large, and the desire to continue the work was strong as ever in the hearts of the remaining members of the Mission. The trials and persecutions had but strengthened and perfected their trust in their Redeemer and Lord.

“The Mission is now baptised with blood, and it cannot die,” said one earnest believer when meeting one of the remaining members of the Mission. After our small group of workers returned to the south it was necessary for me to commence preparations for ensuing work. Time was flying fast and in only a few short months would come the advent of spring, when we were to take up again our missionary work; meanwhile the workers had to rest and study more fully and deeply the Word of God.

After a weeks rest with friends, I commenced preparations for a three months Bible course to

which we purposed to invite earnest Christians who we hoped would become candidates for Christian service. God's abundant blessing rested upon our efforts from the beginning.

The Lord laid it upon the hearts of many of the Mennonite brethren to render timely assistance; at least three Mennonite colonies invited us to hold our Bible courses in their midst. They not only provided suitable buildings for our use as a school, but also free rooming quarters as well as board for all the students.

Our dearly beloved friend—Adolph A. Reimer, a man of God, having worked much among the Russian people, was willing to teach and supervise—without any remuneration other than the joy of doing it. A number of other brethren were willing to cooperate by giving lectures along these lines.

After some necessary arrangements (such as inspecting the buildings, etc.,) we decided to commence our Bible study in Alexandertal; but later, owing to the entreaties of the other two colonies, we decided to hold our courses for a month in each of the three places.



XXX

SAVED FROM DEATH

ALL the arrangements were at length perfected; but we were disquieted not a little by the fact that we had not heard a word from the members of our Mission who had been left so ill on the other side of the Dnieper river. We had hoped and trusted that in due time they would follow us and get back in time to attend the Bible courses.

After praying very earnestly for God's guidance in the venture (and due consultation with the remaining members of the Mission) I decided to go and look them up; then (if they were sufficiently recovered) bring them back with me for the special Bible study.

There had been no correspondence between us for the reason that the postal system was in complete ruin.

Winter had reasserted its reign, and the last few days a blizzard of unusual severity had piled up snow, which drifted in places so that it was nearly on a level with the roofs of the village homes. Roads and streets appeared blocked, while in some places the entrance into the houses could not be seen.

Notwithstanding these unpropitious travelling conditions, the parents of Miss Enns (who

was one of those left ill beyond the Dnieper river) gave their team for the journey, while one of their sons agreed to be my companion in this venture.

One morning, noting that the snow-storm had ceased (although the sky was still gray and sullen) we left home—a fact we were soon to regret! The wind rose, driving the whirling snowflakes in our faces. Apprehension gripped our hearts for we saw we were in for a continued blizzard! In many places the trail was obliterated, but step by step we crept along, (often losing our way in the blinding fury of the storm; then our team would fairly have to swim through the soft snow until we could again pick up the trail.

It took us fully three days to cover the distance to Olgafeld (which was about hundred verst away) with tremendous hardships to boot! On the second day of our journey, having passed the village of Belosiorky at ten o'clock in the morning, we found ourselves out in the appalling vastness of the Russian steppe. Our objective was Big Rogatchick, which lay some thirty verst away out in the open prairie. The blizzard gained in fury, while the sharp wind constantly whirled the snow in our faces. Hour after hour we battled onward in that blinding white whirling world. Speech was lost between us, and to add to our misery sharp hunger gripped us!

Our poor horses (which we had no chance of feeding on the way) seemed utterly played out, and commenced stopping every little while, but we had to urge them on. It had become bitterly

cold so that we felt that our hands and our feet were freezing! To get off and walk—in a pathetic attempt to get warm—was utterly impossible! We were thoroughly exhausted and the snow was knee deep—often more—and our feet would sink as in quicksand! They fairly refused to move forward!

Added to this was a new menace: the country was strange to us! For some hours we had kept track of the trail (although badly drifted) by following a straggling line of telegraph poles, but suddenly the posts were no longer visible, having been cut. There we were out in this howling and whirling blizzard with not a single landmark or guiding sign before us!

Gradually the whirling whiteness changed to a sickly gray for evening was coming on apace. With the creeping darkness there crept into our hearts a benumbing chill,—for death from cold and exposure seemed inevitable! It darkened momentarily, while the wind howled through the desolate wastes, driving the snow in our faces. We were unmistakably lost, so crouching down in the sleigh, to shield ourselves as much as possible from the wind, we gave rein to the poor horses, allowing them to pick their own way as it was impossible for us to see ahead or find any trail. Silently, however, we prayed to God and committed ourselves altogether to His will.

Time seemed endless! Every few minutes our poor horses would stop, then go on and we were not able any longer to encourage them for we were fairly freezing and the end seemed near;

but again God—who is everywhere—reached out and saved us at the last moment!

Peering through the darkness which surrounded us, we noticed some tall black silhouettes, and in a few minutes we could make out that these were a group of windmills, which were invariably found on the outskirts of a village. Joyously giving thanks to God, with renewed courage we pressed on although we were so benumbed that we were scarcely able to move.

In a short time the dark line of buildings loomed before us so that we knew we had reached some village, but the houses appeared half buried in snow. After a search for lodgings we were at length received by a very kind and hospitable family who ministered to our needs.

Thus ended our second days journey. God's mercy in saving us from death was very apparent for if we had kept to the trail we would have perished as there was no village nearer than about ten verst; but leaving our horses free they had turned off the trail and came directly to this village, which we were told was about three verst from the roadway.



XXXI

THE OLD DUST LADEN BIBLE COMES TO LIFE AGAIN

TWO young men helped us into the house when we arrived at this home, then hurried to unharness our exhausted horses.

From the warm comfort of the flat oven top the owner and his wife—both elderly folk—descended and with exclamations of sympathy hastened to help us remove our frozen footwear and clothing, giving us warm and dry garments in exchange.

The good old lady hastily turning from cupboard to oven, prepared supper for us, which when we had tasted seemed the most delicious meal we had ever eaten in all our lives.

Heartily appreciating all the kindness and solicitude of these good folk, we thanked God for sending us to them in our hour of extreme need.

After awhile, strengthened by food and again warm and comfortable, we sat in this happy family circle and talked about God and His wonderful love for the children of men. The two sons, their wives and their parents listened attentively to our testimony regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, then one of them quietly left the circle and went outside, returning shortly with a number of the neighbors who also settled down

to listen. To them we seemed a strange type of visitor. During these troublous times they were daily compelled to meet various strangers who were usually from different warring factions. These ruthlessly robbed them of their last possessions; but now to hear of the love of God through the Gospel was something decidedly unique.

During our discourse I noticed a large volume, which looked like a Bible, lying on top of a wardrobe. I turned to our host with the question, "What book is that Grandpa," (as that was the custom of addressing an old man in Russia among the farmers), "lying there on the wardrobe?" "Ah, my dear, that is our Holy Bible" he replied. "What do you do with it," I continued; "why do you have it; does it benefit you in any way?"

"Ah, yes" said he, "we read it sometimes in the great festival days; there are many good things written in it, but we do not understand much of it; moreover our village priest often warns us that it is bad for us laymen to read the Bible. I and my wife are too old now to read as my sight is very poor; but Paul sometimes reads it for us. I think it is about two years now since it was opened last. No time! and, yes, some laziness too! Young people nowadays have their own interests; company, a little drink, a little gambling and it all takes time!"

"But dad, we surely do not drink much, nor play nearly as much as others do! One must have some amusement," returned Paul, with a deprecatory air in answer to his father's half accusing words.

Asking permission, I took down the Bible and commenced reading, adding explanations and comments. The circle of listeners gathered closer. The father (who had again taken himself to the warm comfort of his oven top) now descended, and wiping his ancient glasses peered over my shoulder into the open Bible, trying to find out for himself if what I read was assuredly written in that book which he had possessed for tens of years, and which lay like a hidden treasure (or an untouched feast) all through the years.

But now, at last, every word was falling upon good soil in their hearts with the convincing force of irrevocable truth and revelation. As I glanced at them I saw that tears were glistening in their eyes.

Two of the neighbors hastened out, returning in a few minutes accompanied by their wives and children, together with some other neighbors.

"Is that really your own Bible he is reading?" was heard from time to time in whispered questions to Paul and his brother.

"Yes, for sure that is our Bible; but what a shame that we did not know what was in it," returned Paul, wiping his eyes. "But let's listen, we can talk later," he concluded.

It was very late when at last the friendly villagers, deeply touched by the Word of God, (happy, repentant and wondering) dispersed for the night, while we, (weary in body but rejoicing in spirit) thanked our Redeemer for this unlooked for opportunity of sowing seed on virgin soil. Then we also retired. Our bed was a big

armful of clean straw spread on the clay floor of that village home.

It was still dark outside when our good hostess wakened us saying "Breakfast is ready!" As we wished to get a good start on our journey, knowing the storm usually abated in the morning, we were grateful for their thoughtfulness and the early meal.

All the members of the household were up as they wished to give us a friendly send-off.

When we were ready to depart, and our team harnessed, we turned to bid farewell to the good folk who had so kindly entertained us. Knowing that they had been to some expense to provide food for us and forage for the horses, we desired to offer them some slight token of our appreciation; but with many expressions of good will they refused anything. The old man (touched by our attitude) fairly flung his arms around my neck, thanked us for our visit, and invited us to stop again at their place on our return trip and stay several days with them.

"To think" he said "that I have lived seventy years and no one has ever before told me anything about my Saviour Jesus Christ. I never knew Him till yester eve, nor anything about what He did for us! After you all retired last night my wife and I passed the remaining hours till dawn in supplication and prayer. We are so thankful that we were able to hear of Him—even in our old age. Our days are numbered for we are both old now and will soon be going Home. Before we didn't want to go (not knowing what to expect); our sins and our transgressions worried us, but now we would go right away if we

could for we know now that He will meet us. Glory! Glory! to His name!"

All of the family and some of the neighbors accompanied us as we started out, until rounding an immense drift of snow on the street we lost sight of them. Their open-hearted friendliness touched us deeply for they had treated us as if we were life-long friends.

But my heart ached when I thought of the thousands of people who belonged to this village (which was about twelve verst long) who had never heard the wonderful story of the Saviour of men. The harvest was ripe! Over all the land could be seen everywhere intense and urgent need. May God in His mercy send us more laborers, was the cry of my heart.

In every village where we stopped for the night on this memorable journey, many souls who heard the Word of God eagerly embraced it and promised henceforth to serve Him—and Him only.

At length our journey came to an end and was crowned with joy. Truly we had "Come forth with weeping," but were now returning "with rejoicing" for we found our Mission workers had all recovered from their illness, and some had commenced again their work for Christ and were holding meetings in the village. Others were just leaving their sick bed, consequently were still very weak; but they were strong in spirit and were trusting the Lord to strengthen them for the long and strenuous journey ahead of them as they accompanied us on our return trip. But right here I must recount one very interesting incident of our journey. Before we had yet

crossed the Dnieper river, while stopping for the night at Lower Rogatchick, we had a blessed opportunity to witness for Christ before a considerable number of the villagers.

One young man, who listened attentively to the message, was converted. Although only twenty years of age he was the brilliant leader of a murderous band of Mackno's troopers, and had completely terrorized the village and the outlying districts. Ruthlessly, at point of bayonet, the inhabitants were plundered while the country was laid waste and left in utter desolation. And now, on our return trip, we again lodged in this village.

We were eager to hold a meeting, but unfortunately there appeared no way of collecting a congregation because it was so bitterly cold and stormy. Naturally we felt saddened, but this young convert noticing our depression, suddenly turned to us and said: "Be ready at the appointed hour to testify for Christ in the village hall. All the people of the village will be there to listen, and neither cold nor storm will hinder their coming!"

Immediately he went out, saddled his splendid mount (which had been his war horse) and rode away.

We could not understand this procedure, nor how the people could be collected for a meeting in such a storm for outside it was darkening as the storm gathered force. The snow was falling in whirling eddies as I stood at the window and watched it; but in spite of the storm I noticed the villagers (wrapped in fur coats) coming in groups and singly, hurrying past the window

toward the building appointed for the meeting.

Not long after our young friend again entered the room and announced, "All is ready, and whoever feels well enough to brave the cold and storm, follow me!"

The large building was packed to its capacity. It was unheated, but the warmth of that dense living crowd soon changed the atmosphere. It proved no easy task to make our way through the crowd to the place in front prepared for us.

Naturally we wondered how these villagers had been persuaded, in such a short time and on such a stormy night, to congregate in this cold hall, but an explanation was soon forthcoming. After singing a number of hymns and delivering a short but pointed address, our young friend arose and asked permission to say a few words. We quickly assented and he faced the congregation, saying:

"You all know me as a veritable tiger in human form! That is no marvel for I have been a fiend! You feared to meet me in the street, and today when I rode through the town and told you all to come here in spite of the storm and cold, you all came, as I very well know, from fear; but this time I simply wanted you all to attend this Gospel meeting and had no intention of robbing you nor threatening to shoot you. You do not see my old companions all armed from head to foot, do you? You will also notice that I am unarmed, in fact all my arms I have destroyed and will not use them again. I am now in company with people who read of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His love for men. I will tell you everything! Three days ago two

of these men spent the night here, and I heard that they were telling people about Christ—the Saviour of men. With the firm intention of ridiculing them I went where they were, but God's redeeming power touched my heart, and I straightway repented of my sins and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. From this day I am no longer a cruel communist, but a disciple of Christ. Tonight, standing before you, I bitterly repent of all the woe and suffering I have caused you, and ask you to forgive me. The devil surely had my cruel heart in his possession and I did not realize what I was doing; but Christ has forgiven me all (as He once forgave the thief on the cross). Pardon me also for this evening's summons, but I decided to gather you all together once more, (not to seize your grain, cattle and clothing) but to ask your forgiveness; besides it is a wonderful opportunity for us all to hear the glorious Gospel of Christ."

"God has forgiven you, and we do too," was heard from many in the audience.

The meeting continued not less than five hours, and it was late, yet people, with streaming eyes, listened, gripped by the wonderful story of God's redeeming love and grace. Many gave their hearts to Him that evening, and I remember seeing a number of the new brethren with open-hearted frankness salute with an holy kiss their former tyrant, who was born again and now their brother in Christ.

It must have been after midnight when (after the last hymn and benediction) we parted for the night and sought our lodgings. The blizzard was in full fury and the snow beat down behind

our collars, and melting, ran in little streams down our necks; but notwithstanding the outward storm the peace of God reigned in many hearts.

As we continued on our way conversing and praising God, we did not seem to mind the storm because our hearts were overflowing with joy over what God had wrought. Glory to Christ who givest peace, joy and light to storm-tossed men—even in our day!

It took about ten or twelve days for our journey, but all the way we were protected by God's loving care and surrounded by His mercy so that, together with our scattered members, we safely reached our base and could now enthusiastically proceed with our first month's Bible course.



XXXII

ON MOUNT TABOR AT THE FEET OF CHRIST

CONTRASTED with the storm and hardship experienced during our period of work, the Bible courses, which commenced in February, were like a glorified period on the Mount of Transfiguration to all the members of our Mission. All felt a certain divine peace and happiness, as relieved of all recent hardships they were privileged to sit at the feet of Christ, and drink, as it were, the pure waters of life from His divine Word.

In spite of the fact that some of our members were considerably weakened by their illness, none of the brothers and sisters (whom we brought back) decided to remain at home, but all—in one hearty unison—came to study the Word of God.

We had hoped to collect some thirty students for the courses; but in this instance the reality exceeded our most sanguine expectations as fully fifty-three students attended; we had to send some others away because no suitable accommodation could be found for them.

Soon after the commencement of our course, we had the unexpected joy of greeting Brother Michailoff who arrived from Moscow, where he had been left by our late president—Brother J. Dyck. In company with Sister L., he had jour-

neyed all the way from Moscow to the south, either walking or driving from village to village and holding meetings in each place. This journey of over one thousand verst was accomplished through great risk and hardship during severe winter weather. God had abundantly blessed their heroic efforts for many souls had made their peace with Him as a result of their travelling ministry. It took them several months to make the journey; but now we had the joy of welcoming them to our haven of rest and study, meanwhile praising God for all His mercy during our work as well as for His guidance in the present undertaking.

In the course of these Bible studies we were confronted with one serious question, which compelled us to diligently search the Scriptures for the solution to our problem, and to pray for guidance. It was this, viz., "May Christian women, on the authority of the Bible, work in the Mission or in the churches on an equal footing with the brethren?"

We studied the Old and New Testaments, in order to get from all the writings all possible authority regarding the place women have occupied (under appointment of God) from the beginning, as well as during the early church days and the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. We reached the conclusion (from Scripture and consideration of our former experiences): "That preaching by Christian women appears as a self instituted service, and not founded upon the authority of the Scriptures. Every self instituted service, however favorable it may look from the

human standpoint, is not acceptable in the sight of God."

During our former Mission work the lady workers had engaged in other branches of activity than that of preaching. There was plenty of work for them outside the pulpit, such as visiting the sick, conducting meetings for women and children as well as helping in prayer and singing during our meetings. In short, they graciously performed the work laid out for them in the Word of God—through the Holy Spirit. Oh, if only in every church and religious institution everyone would apply himself to the role which God hath appointed for him! The spirit of antichrist is fast spreading over the world in our days, obstructing and misconstruing every rule and law ordained by God from the beginning, and is infecting the churches themselves with its poisonous elements. Often, even from behind pulpits, his ideas are broad-casted. May God Himself save His redeemed children from erring from the truth of God's Word!

During the whole course of our Bible study, every Sunday all the Brothers and Sisters of our party (dividing into small groups) would walk or drive into the nearby villages and hold meetings. The ministry resulted in many sinners being brought into the fold. The blessings received weekly from the study of the Scriptures, were in this way flowing out in a broad stream over the neighboring localities, bringing great happiness to many hearts.

XXXIII

AGAIN IN THE VALLEY WITH THE LORD OF HOSTS

SLOWLY the spring of 1920 heralded its advent, bringing with it the possibility of again commencing a wider and more active evangelistic campaign for the Lord.

The tempest of civil war was still raging and in full swing. Economic conditions in the land were becoming more and more desperate. Train transportation was in complete ruin. In some places miserable freighters still plied between centers. Sometimes for special occasions, and especially for the use of the officials in power, passenger trains were in evidence. Going by team from village to village, as we had often travelled before, became more and more difficult as marauding parties terrorized the land. On the other hand the peasants now hardly possessed any horses as every passing troop had mercilessly plundered them taking away their last stocks. In view of the existing circumstances, only two groups of workers could be sent out when the Bible course was ended. One was delegated to go to the Tambovsk Province and work in the big tent; the other was to get the tent and supplies from Moscow and bring them to the center—or base of the Mission, and work in the Ukraine.

Notwithstanding all difficulties and many privations, the Lord continually blessed the work that year as in the past years, giving visible help in times of greatest stress and need.



XXXIV

THE IMPOSSIBLE HE MAKETH POSSIBLE

TO bring out our tents and supplies to our center, a journey to Moscow and Petrograd was inevitable. Three of us were able to go on the engine of a train to Kharkow. The engineer was a Christian man and a friend of ours, but beyond that town our path seemed to be cut off completely. We passed three days in Kharkow visiting every office that had anything to do with giving permits for travelling, and we tried by every honorable means to get permission to board a train to Moscow, but it was of no avail. Every petition was met by a prompt refusal. Permission for travelling was only granted to those on business for the Government, or Military Officials, who held travel orders. We were told at every point: "You and your mandate should be destroyed. Our proletariat trains are for the use, and for the good of the people, not for fellows who go about sowing fool ideas among the population, therefore there is no permission to be granted you, nor any room for you on our trains."

At length, on the fourth day, the idea occurred to me (as if sent by God Himself) as a last resource to apply to the Military Commandant of the station. He had charge of some special

coaches set apart for the use of the highest officials and their various staffs, bearing all the secret documents of the war departments. Though it was highly improbable that we would get permission to travel in such exclusive quarters, yet we decided to try it.

Entering the office of the Commandant, and laying my missionary mandate before him, I courteously inquired if he would give me permission to board the special military train.

To my great surprise and satisfaction he replied in the affirmative, allowing us to go in the military staff's coach on the very first train; further he even gave us three tickets so that we could use the special sleeper all the way to Moscow. Therefore on the fifth day of our stay at Kharkow we were able to board the special train. Our hearts were full of gratitude to God that, by His will, the impossible had been made possible.

Only a few minutes passed when we received further proof that from the human standpoint we would never have been able to board this train. Brother Michailoff (the ever active and eloquent witness for Christ), believing that a lost opportunity never comes back, quickly grafted himself into the intermittant conversation, and was soon in a deep religious conversation with the high officials of the "Red Army." Then from a nearby berth I heard the following remark: "Evidently we have some passengers here who have no business whatever to be in this coach! They surely do not belong to the staff and they do not even belong to the army. They are most

likely our enemies and counter-revolutionaries. How in the world did they obtain passage here?"

"Well, well, Comrade, cool off," I heard in conciliatory tones from his companion: "the Commandant knows what he is about. Who knows for what special reason they are here! We may just as well leave them in peace!"

This dialogue clearly showed us that we had better maintain silence, else we might lose this God-given opportunity to get to our destination. Added to this was the fact that we were utterly exhausted and needed to rest.

As the train thundered on a prayer ascended to our Heavenly Father from the depths of our hearts: "Oh Lord, may Thy kingdom come, to this world of war and strife and bloodshed, for then all the means in the country, (even transportation) will be fully employed for the good of the people, and not for the purpose of slaying one's fellowmen as it is now."

In the eyes of the authorities we had no possible right to travel on this train; yet in the last analysis our cause was tremendously more important than that of the hundreds alongside who were travelling for the cause of destruction, rapine, and blood-shed in the land. Ours was the very opposite: the salvation of men's immortal souls and to help the needy.

Some six weeks later I was again constrained to make this same journey alone. God graciously vouchsafed me on this occasion also to realize that to Him nothing is impossible, and that He always gives divine aid when we turn to Him for help.

After our work in Moscow and Petrograd had been accomplished (having secured a box car for our tents, religious literature and supplies) my two companions (Michailoff and V.) remained to load and bring it all to our center; while I was compelled to return south as my health completely broke down. The last winter's terrible exposures were now paying dividends for I was stricken with a malignant form of rheumatism, which fairly crippled me so that I had to go to the city of Slavjansk for treatment in the sanitarium.

A month passed, yet our supplies from Moscow still tarried, and as not a word was heard from the brethren in charge, this looked serious. They should have arrived with their supplies in a week or two after I had left. At length an acquaintance (one of the trainmen) informed me that he had heard current reports that both Michailoff and V., enroute from Moscow, were shot to death on one of the stations not far from Kursk, while our tents, literature and all other supplies were confiscated by the government.

To find out if this report was true, it was necessary for me to go personally to the place. I was considerably inclined to regard them as possible as I recalled one instance during my stay at Slavjansk when one day I was unexpectedly, and for some unknown cause, arrested and brought before the G. P. U. for a strict examination, while my papers and belongings were subjected to a microscopic scrutiny. To my carefully worded inquiry as to the cause of my arrest the examiner hastily rejoined: "It was strictly necessary, but now we see there was a mistake."

After some delay I was released. But that explanation left a dark foreboding that my arrest might have had some connection with the reported death of my two co-workers.

My journey to Kharkow was accomplished safely, but further my way was cut off by a new barrier in the appearance of a large party of sailors who were travelling north and demanded passage on the same train on which I had secured permission to travel. To give them room the prospective passengers (although possessing permissions) were all subjected to a strict process of elimination. All our papers were again looked over, and any passenger travelling for any minor reason (according to their standards) was forbidden to board the train. Feeling certain that as soon as they saw my Mission papers my permission would be taken from me, I silently prayed to God for His aid and protection. As the passengers, one by one filed up the platform to the agent of the "Death Tribunal" and to a sailor, who were doing the eliminating, I tendered my papers also. The sailor looked at them, and then turned on me in great fury: "Eh, what have we here? So these saintly beings travel on our proletariat trains, and we sailors (defenders of the working classes) have to languish in hunger for weeks at the stations ere we can get passage! This is a fine condition of affairs I should say! You should all be shot and hung on telegraph posts instead of being permitted to ride on our trains!" he cried in his fury. The agent turned to him and said something which started a rather hot argument between them. As it grew in intensity I passed them quietly and left them to



Two pictures of the author. The first one taken at the age of nineteen. The second only six years later, while being president of the R. E. T. Mission after the martyr's death of his co-workers—in a time of severe persecution. Persecution compelled him to grow a beard, what made him look like an old man, his face being skinny and wrinkly from suffering. Communists often told him: "It is time for you old man to go into the grave and you are still fooling and corrupting the people with your Gospel."

fight out among themselves who should travel on the train.

Approaching the coach in which I was granted permission to travel, I was again disappointed as the car was crowded to the limit: even the aisles were packed full. The air was suffocating and reeking with perspiration, tobacco smoke and dust. I was forced to retreat, while through the broken panes of the window were heard voluble cursing and groans. Some one cried "Air, air, I am suffocating, let me get out!" It was extremely hot; people who were hurrying along to secure places in the train were fairly bathed in perspiration.

The gong sounded once, twice; soon the train would be in motion. Together with a number of others I still continued to search for a place on the train, then I asked the officer in charge of the train if I could ride on the platform of the coach. Although refusing this privilege to everybody else he allowed me to step on just before the train started. Soon the soldier who guarded the train (fearing comment from the motley passengers) suggested that I go up to the flat roof of the coach. This appeared dangerous at first, but the guard assured me that I would find my position up there infinitely better than in the reeking, suffocating coaches. So I crept on to the roof. As the train was moving I felt somewhat queer at first, but after a few minutes was convinced that the trainman had given me good advice. The train glided along with perfect smoothness, and I experienced neither jar nor shake. Committing myself in prayer to God's Almighty care, I spread my blanket be-

tween the two ventilators of the coach, and lying down gave myself up to thought.

It was a glorious warm summer evening; the sky, immense and distant, was sprinkled with myriads of brilliant stars; there was no wind, but a refreshing current of air was created by the speed of the train. As my eyes roved over the expansive, purpling sky, these words of Holy Writ passed through my mind: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose", and I sincerely thanked Him for the unquestionable truth even in this instance. Riding on the roof, (contrasted with the conditions below where tobacco smoke, mingled with oaths, heat and stench, with the passengers crowded to the limit and standing for hours with no chance of moving) was one pleasant, restful excursion. Committing myself once more into the care of the Almighty, I soon closed my eyes and sleep stole over me.

When I awoke the train was nearing the city of Kursk. On the roof it had been pleasant enough during the night, but now (since the sun had arisen) it became unbearably hot. Added to this, one of the guards told me that at Kursk the train would undoubtedly be closely examined, and to travel on the roof would then be impossible; the officer in charge of the train would not be able to help in such a case.

To leave the train would mean weeks of waiting for another opportunity to go further; it might even mean losing my permission to travel at all. God had however, marvelously prepared a much better turn of affairs for me. As the train

stopped at Kursk a number of passengers alighted, and although there were hundreds of candidates ready for each of the few vacated seats (who had been waiting—may be—for weeks for this opportunity) the Military Commandant of the station once more gave me permission to travel in the coach exclusively reserved for the highest Military Staffs.

Here again, by God's help, the impossible was made possible. The night before I had enjoyed the refreshing coolness outside, as well as the beauty and majesty of the starry sky, the work of His hands. Now, when the scorching heat made that place untenable, I was accorded the privilege of travelling inside in rather goodly quarters, where a sleeper was also placed at my disposal.

These are only two incidents (out of dozens of others) which I have recorded here as illustrations of God's visible aid. Truly He bears His own as on "eagle wings" and turns the hearts of His open enemies to offer aid and succor to His faithful children. May His name ever be glorified!

With great joy and relief I learned that the report of the death of our brethren and the loss of our supplies was false. After a short while they all safely arrived at our center, bringing also their precious freight, which was used for the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls.

The delay was due to the fact that because of the urgent requests of the Christians in Moscow and Petrograd, Brother H. E. and Michailoff held meetings there.

NO FETTERS FOR THE WORD OF GOD

THE group delegated for work in the Tambov government was doomed to experience many trials and persecutions.

The first drawback was the loss of the tent in which they were to work. It had been left there for safe keeping in 1918. The following year of 1919 the passing army of General Mamontoff, belonging to Denikin's forces, had appropriated it. That vicinity was stricken with appalling famine and there seemed to be no possibility of securing provisions of any kind. The supply which they had taken from the center had been stolen from them on the train. Notwithstanding these privations and trials, though often suffering hunger, this tiny group commenced its work without the tent.

As they bravely overcame each difficulty which arose as a barrier along their way, God abundantly blessed their efforts. Many souls were saved, and for them this was the very best reward and remuneration they could receive. It was something that gave them strength and renewed their spirit to continue to bear all their privations and to keep their banner uplifted.

After some time the group (with the exception of Brother R. who happened to be in another place) was arrested, taken to head-quarters

and then put into the dark gloomy prison at Koslov, where for a fortnight they were behind prison bars.

In this instance the will of God was also visible, and His guiding hand clearly revealed, for there in prison, in hopeless and helpless confinement, were precious souls for whom Christ died. It was His will that they should hear His message of salvation and be among the redeemed. It is written "For the Word of God there are no bonds."

The gloomy prison walls soon echoed the strains of sweet Gospel song. His children were praising Him who made the heavens and the earth. At first the officers of the prison sternly forbade their singing, and also commanded them not to speak to the other prisoners, but about three days later real Gospel meetings were held in the prison; and not only the prisoners, but the guards and officers were among the eager listeners to God's living Word.

In a few more days the people dwelling near turned out in masses near the prison walls to listen to the singing and to hear about Christ.

The conditions in the prison beggared description, and the missionaries suffered terribly. Added to the loathsome unsanitary conditions in their cells, were the pangs of hunger. Soiled water for drinking purposes, with one-eighth of a pound of bread as the daily ration, was just enough to keep up the gnawing desire for more. But God's mercy was over them even here, and He who sent the ravens with food for His prophet Elijah, likewise found means to send His followers sustenance. One day the brethren

received a packet containing a few pounds of bread, for which from the depths of their hearts they thanked God.

Among the townsfolk who had come to the prison walls to listen to the sermons and singing, were some who had been touched by the Word. The desire to help entered their hearts and in spite of their own great need (for the city was starving) they sent this precious parcel of bread "To be delivered to those who sang and spoke of God."

Brother R. (upon arrival in the city, and learning about the imprisonment of the Mission group) took immediate steps for their release. Thus, after two weeks incarceration in prison, or shall we say a two weeks Gospel work among the prisoners (which in reality their imprisonment amounted to) they were discharged.

It was impossible to continue work in this region, so they departed south to their center, while some went homeward to continue working for their Master singly—in various places.

Famine and persecutions made our work more and more impossible.



XXXVI

THEIR WORK COMPLETED TWO MORE WENT TO BE WITH THE LORD

NOTWITHSTANDING the great need of reapers for souls in these boundless harvest fields of Russia, it was God's will to call unto Himself two more members of the Tent Mission.

Shortly after arriving from Moscow with the tents, and other needed supplies for our work, Brother Michailoff was stricken with a malignant form of reactionary typhus, which he had contracted on the way. His system, sadly depleted and wearied by trials and privations, was unable to resist successfully this disease, and he quietly departed to be with his Saviour and Lord.

This outstanding personality (physically semi-crippled) was wonderfully gifted with a brilliant memory and great oratorical powers. Converted to Christ and devoting his gifts to his Master's service, he was amazingly instrumental in winning the souls of men. The most hardened and bigoted atheist could not remain indifferent before the great convincing power of his sermons. For a few years he had worked as the minister of the All-Russian Union of the Baptists, and then, invited by Brother J. Dyck, he gave himself heart and soul to the work of the

Tent Mission. Death came to him when he was still in the midst of his work; so he entered into rest right from the field of action.

At the same time Brother Shafran, who had been left for evangelistic work in the south, was killed in the village of Tshernigovka. He had worked but a few days in the village but with very blessed results. Many souls were turning to God, but Satan roused his cohorts to stop this brother's good work.

One day, having left his temporary lodgings, Brother Shafran turned to visit a man who was seeking the truth. In the village at that time was quartered a large squad of soldiers. Brother Shafran had gone but a few paces when in his wake he heard the following words: "There he is and we just need him!" Looking back he saw a number of horsemen approaching. "Halt! Stand still!" cried one of them. "Who are you and what are you doing in this village? Who sent you here?" rained on him in one stream of questions.

"I am one whom the Lord Jesus Christ has sent to preach His Gospel among sinners that they may turn to Him with all their hearts, stop doing evil one to another, and be saved," quietly answered this servant of Christ as he looked with love upon his questioner.

"Ah, so you preach the Gospel of repentance among the people! Good! We will hear you!" Spurring their mounts forward they surrounded him, and the officer commanded him to read the Bible to them.

With great joy Shafran hastened to comply, and drawing his Bible from his pocket began his last testimony for Christ. A great crowd gath-

ered around, while he continued to read and exhort his listeners to turn their hearts to God while there was yet time. The crowd listened attentively, but on the faces of the military men could be seen an evil ironclad look of derision.

"Enough!" at last cried one of them, roughly breaking in upon his reading. "We must now search you. What have you got in your satchel and in your pockets?" They proceeded to look over his humble collection of things.

The villagers, seeing how roughly and brutally they conducted their search, commenced to protest, saying, "Do let this man alone. He is perfectly harmless—release him!" They continued to beg for his release, but to no avail for the storm gathered around him.

"He should be killed right now—sowing heresy among our good orthodox Catholic Christians," cried the opposing side. "Let's dispose of him in typical martial style! Illustrious Officers do not let him slander our Mother church—the orthodox Catholic Christian church which you and your fathers have believed in all their lives! He is a Jew and is now preaching of Christ! It is evident that he is deceiving the people!"

"He is a spy, a spy!" cried others of the infuriated defenders of the Catholic faith. "Slay him, the perverter!"

"Wait, Sir Officers," again begged the villagers. "He is not a spy! He has been here a few days in our village and nobody has heard anything from him excepting sermons and discourses about God and Christ. Why accuse an innocent man? Release him and let him continue

his way in peace. He has not spoken anything against the Catholic Church or the clergy; he has not even mentioned them."

"Well, perhaps we had better let him go," said one of the officers. "What crime is it if anyone reads the Bible to others and preaches?" "Yes, I will release him right away," hoarsely cried the officer who had conducted the examination. Suddenly snatching his saber out of its scabbard, he cried, "Stand aside, Officers!"

"My Lord forgive them," was all this servant of Christ had time to say.

"Oh, oh!" came the horrified exclamation from the crowd. "The wretch!" cried one.

With head split from the cruel saber stroke, like a mown blade of grass Brother Shafran fell to the ground covered with blood. A few more blows were added, then wiping his saber on the clothes of his dying victim the assassin mounted his horse and spurred away, his companions following.

Thus died one more faithful and devoted witness for Christ, with a prayer on his lips for his murderers.

Only three years had Brother Shafran been converted from the Jewish faith. During our visit to Ekaterinoslav, shortly before the martyr death of our group of missionaries, he had joined our Mission. When questioned by his friends (Hebrew believers at Ekaterinoslav) as to how long he was going to remain a member of the Mission, he had calmly answered "Until God sees fit to take me unto Himself."

Thus, so soon, God had called him away. During our Mission work he had contracted a

virulent typhoid attack, but as soon as he was convalescent he again took up his work for Christ. Although naturally delicate in health, he had never side-stepped any of the hardships and privations attendant upon the Mission work in the Russian villages, but had nobly borne his share of every burden.

He never lost an opportunity to speak about his Saviour—"The Messiah" to his people. Always gentle and helpful, it can be safely said that he loved his Saviour whole-heartedly and with the simplicity of a child.

"May God send us in his place, other workers like unto him," prayed the rest of the Mission workers when they heard of his martyrdom.



XXXVII

AGAIN THE OPEN DOOR

THE workers of the Tent Mission, one by one, were being quietly called away to their Lord, who had originally called them out to work for Him in this world. Their places however, remained empty. Not many could decide to journey about in these perplexing troublous times. Financial conditions were also becoming more and more straitened and difficult. Famine was raging in the land. The urgent need of looking after their own families, and providing for their physical needs through this crisis became more imperative, taking many away from missionary activities and uninterrupted work for the Lord. Those who were left however, still went on (in tiny groups or singly) to carry the Gospel message to the needy and thirsting population.

The work which had presented such an immense front in the beginning, was decreasing more and more; still it was God's will that the Tent Mission should exist for some time yet. He again opened the door for a work of considerable proportions.

In the fall of 1920 the civil war gradually ceased. The Soviets had at last gained full control of the land. Pillage and murder from va-

rious marauding parties also ceased to some extent.

Hoping that now, with the dawn of a quieter era, we could develop our evangelistic work on a larger scale, I went to the highest authorities to obtain full official permission to extend our work over all the land. For some ten days I was kept busy going from one executive office to another, until at length I obtained the desired result. During that ten days one party of officials would hear me through and then send me on to other offices. These in turn would still send me further; others would read the petition and our statutes, but would consider themselves unable to register the Mission, while some (not even reading all the rules and regulations) would fling them down with the angry exclamation: "You should not receive permission for such an undertaking, but should be taken to the "Death Tribunal" and shot as a counter-revolutionist!" Through all these harrowing and wearying circumstances there was ample occasion to experience great blessing and help from God. There was always a strong feeling of the helpful power of prayer as other children of God prayed for me and my undertaking.

Together with Brother B. (who kindly provided temporary lodgings for me in his home) I knelt, and in earnest prayer presented to our Heavenly Father our great need of His help.

The lately displaced monarchial power had considered all believers of Christ as revolutionaries, persecuting them and exiling many to distant wild and barren points of the empire. Now this new communistic power, which had suc-

ceeded it, calling themselves "The Peoples Rule," also regarded Christians as counter-revolutionaries and threatened them with imprisonment and death.

One morning Brother B. went to his work, and once more before going forth to negotiate again for the "Permission" I knelt in prayer. When I arose from my knees I was surprised to see in the doorway of my chamber, with eyes uplifted to heaven, the kneeling form of Brother B.'s mother, an aged lady of some ninety years of age.

"Pardon me, my Son," she said meekly, "that I have come here, but I know how hard it is for you now; every day when you go out I pass hours in prayer for you and your undertaking. I keep thinking 'perhaps God's servant is even now standing before the authorities' so I pray for you. Today I could not keep away for somehow I feel that you will have a very hard time today. 'Help him by prayer' some inner voice keeps telling me."

With profound gratitude to God I listened to the words of this aged servant of Christ who had steadfastly stood in prayer for me during these trying days. It became suddenly clear to me why Governor Antonoff (when yesterday he had taken down the receiver of his desk telephone with the threatening words: "I will now call for the agent of the 'Death Tribunal' and I will let him speak to you in his language") had suddenly changed his decision and pushed the telephone away.

Cheered and strengthened by God I departed again to undertake new negotiations and to seek

further interviews. Prayer was heard and God gave me His Almighty aid. The statute of the Tent Mission, which was presented for consideration, was at length duly registered by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Ukraine. This opened a wide field for further activities for our Mission.



XXXVIII

A REGISTERED MISSION WITH LEGAL BACKGROUND AND FULL RIGHTS

The Mission had now permission:

1st. To journey to every city and village of the Empire; to hold religious meetings with readings, lectures and expositions of the Bible, and religious discourses in their own tents or in any building available for like purpose, and in the open-air.

2nd. To cooperate with the Medical Establishments (Narkomzdrav) and their branches in rendering medical aid to the population.

3rd. To visit inns and lodging houses, public dining rooms, hospitals and all other public buildings for the purpose of preaching the Gospel.

4th. To cooperate with the authorities of state welfare (Narkomsobeza) in establishing orphanages and other charitable institutions.

5th. To assist the department of education (Narkomprosa) in establishing public schools for children, and children's homes.

All these rights were given and duly registered by the highest authorities. This gave a hopeful outlook to our work and opened wide perspectives for the future.

Soon there was occasion for still more pro-

found thankfulness that by God's mercy the work of the Mission was now legal.

From Kharkow I went south to where the other workers were stationed, and where also were the greatest number of the Mission's friends. For some six months this locality had been cut off by a war front, but now Wrangel's army was completely defeated and the place was now open; yet in every German and Russian village the "Red" troopers were quartered.

Stopping for a short time in the colony of Tiegenhagen I began to hold meetings. Into the first service came many communistic soldiers. The Lord manifested His power. After the meeting there was a lengthy conversation, and tracts were distributed. Many begged me to hold a meeting again on the following day.

It was about one o'clock in the night when, weary from my latest journeys and from the various activities of an exceedingly busy day I had just dropped off to sleep, when I was awakened by a loud and insistent knocking at the door. In a few minutes a number of soldiers, heavily armed, entered my room, and I was obliged to arise and receive the unwelcome nocturnal visitors.

"Are you the man who preached today in the church in this place, and is your surname Astakhoff?" began the officer of the group.

"Yes, my name is Astakhoff," I returned. "I held a meeting today and have announced another service for tomorrow."

"Oh, about tomorrow we will speak later," angrily commented the officer. "Did you or someone else provide the soldiers and others of

the congregation with this here?" he inquired, laying before me one of the tracts I had distributed, under the heading: "Wheat or Straw."

"Yes, this is my tract," I answered, "but what is the matter, and what do you want of me at this late hour?"

"What we want, eh? This! You are arrested! Dress and follow us to the Staff. We must investigate and find out who you are and what is the nature of your activities. You are a counter-revolutionist! Who, in your opinion is the straw which is to burn with fires unquenchable, and who is the wheat? Ah! you think we do not know! It is we the Proletariats (the working classes) who are the straw—by your thinking—and will burn in everlasting fires; while all the idle rich (Boerguazier)—the "White Hands" are wheat and will be with Christ in Paradise? That is so, eh?"

I invited them to sit down, as all this while, with drawn arms, these "Red" troopers had stood as on guard. Then I opened my Bible and read Matt. 3:12 (about which text the tract had been written) and explained the divine meaning of "wheat and straw."

"God does not judge people by their economic conditions, or because of the class to which they belong, but by the condition of their hearts. He does not divide them into rich and poor classes, but as righteous and sinful. If you, or others, live in sin, go your own way against God's will, then you are "straw" and cannot escape the fate recorded in the Bible and in this tract; but Christ desires, and can make all the people "golden

grain" for His heavenly granary, if they repent of their sins and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This rule is not my own, neither does it apply to any class of persons, but it is God's own rule, and it is right and true and faithful, even as is He whose throne is the heavens and whose footstool is the earth."

"If after having read this tract you see by your life that you are "straw", then I counsel you to turn to Christ as you would turn to an only avenue of escape from a burning city. He will forgive you if you will accept Him as your Saviour. If you wish we can pray to Him right now." With this invitation I ended my remarks. For nearly an hour they had all been sitting in attentive silence.

"Nay, Comrade," returned the officer, "I thank you for your explanation, but we do not know how to pray," he added as if apologizing. "Nevertheless, I have orders for your arrest therefore you will be obliged to go along with us."

Taking out from my papers the lately registered Mission Statute I handed it to the officer, saying, "I think my arrest will be unnecessary now; you see I do not work illegally but with the full permission of the highest powers; but tomorrow morning I can go to the Staff and give the necessary explanations, if such is needed."

The officer glanced at my papers and ejaculated: "Good! this paper saves you from much! You may now remain here at your lodgings and I will take your papers and present them to the

Staff, then tomorrow morning you come to the office."

Going to the headquarters of the Staff next morning I again realized that through the registered papers of the Mission God had saved me (and many other believers of this place—who had assisted me to organize the meetings and distribute tracts) from imminent danger. We learned later that this Staff was the Military Field Revolutionary Tribunal which conducted a pitiless secret surveillance, and ruthlessly shot everyone who fell under their suspicion.

After yesterday's meeting the above mentioned tract "Wheat and Straw" was given to the Examining Inspector, who hastily reading it pronounced it to be the most virulent counter-revolutionary article he had ever read. I saw it now lying on the table before him (together with my papers—which gave permission to carry on our meetings—and which bore the seal of the highest officials of the Ukraine). The decision of the Staff regarding me had been already consummated previous to my arrival.

"If you had not possessed that paper, Comrade," said the Military Examiner, pointing to my Statute, "we would have ended your career today!"

Thanking him for his sincerity, I called his attention to the tract and its unquestionable truths. The members of the Tribunal gathered around (also some twenty guards) and for some two hours I spoke to them of Christ. The Lord surely manifested His power for enemies were becoming friends. Tears glistened in the eyes of

many as I talked. When I commenced my discourse several of these communists had plied me with various questions. Now however they all sat quietly and gave undivided attention to the message, which was at last brought to a close by the noon hour.

After dinner, by permission of the Commander of the Tribunal, I was able to hold a meeting again in the church in Tiegenhagen, which was attended by nearly all the members of the Tribunal and the guards. Again the Lord was glorified and manifested His help and victory.

The coming winter was likewise spent in blessed work for the Lord. The brethren, under protection of the Mission's legal rules and regulations for activity, went singly from place to place preaching the Gospel and distributing religious literature, of which (in spite of the spiritual famine in the land) the Mission at that time possessed a sufficient quantity.



XXXIX

HE SAVES FROM FOES THAT WHICH PERTAINS TO HIS GLORY

THE revolution and civil war (which had ravaged the land for a number of years, bringing in its wake destruction, famine and pestilence) had also—as a sideline—brought in a great literary famine, especially of portions from the Holy Scripture and religious literature of all kinds. Religious printing and all book shops were by the presiding powers doomed to speedy destruction. All available stores were confiscated. To print new supplies of religious literature was not allowed. Before wholesale destruction had commenced the Mission had managed to secure a large supply. When the great printing establishment “Raduga” (the only printing place where only pure Gospel literature was printed) liquidated, all its store were by the authorities themselves given over to the Tent Mission.

This fact again showed us that God keeps in safety (and from enemies) what will ultimately add to His glory. All the machinery and valuables of the establishment were partially plundered and removed to other printing concerns, while the warehouse containing the store of printed literature was sealed up awaiting its disposition by the central authorities who were

to decide where the supply should be shipped.

The presiding President of the local Soviet, communist Glazov (one of the Hungarian war prisoners who had failed to return to his native land when peace was signed) now sought with his utmost powers to obtain a speedy permission from the central powers to destroy all that pertained to religion and God.

The former owners of the Raduga, knowing that destruction threatened their stores (which were prepared for the glory of God) requested me to save the literature if possible, and distribute it among the people.

At length (after waiting upon God in prayer), conducting endless negotiations with the authorities, I was rewarded by getting full legal permission to take charge of all religious literature belonging to Raduga.

A representative was sent from the county headquarters of authority to take down the seals, and then I experienced Satan's last attempt to ruin my prospects. If the permission had been delayed two hours all the literature would have been destroyed. Only a few minutes after the Imperial seals were taken off of the warehouse, Glazov himself appeared and made virulent protest.

Turning on me fiercely, he said, "Who gave you permission to break into this government building and lay your hands on the goods? These belong to the working and farming classes! You defend the idle rich, the owners of these riches obtained from the laboring masses! All you who preach about God are nothing but foes of our

Soviet government and are the most seditious of 'counter-revolutionaries. Instead of taking charge of this literature here you should be dragged down to the cellar and shown the power of a revolver!"

"Quiet down please, Comrade Glazov," I returned to the infuriated officer. "You would have a right to accuse me if I were guilty of any of the crimes you have enumerated, but here there is no possible irregularity. I am not taking the literature of my own accord; the seals you will see have not been removed by myself but by a representative of the government. In fact I am granted full permission to take charge of these stores. Thereupon I showed him the written permission, but it only tended to infuriate him the more.

"Who in the world gave you this permission? I protest against it! I have permission myself from the highest authorities to take all this waste paper to the factory and destroy it. At the station I have a box car specially ordered on which to load it. Men with wagons will be here in a few hours to take it all to the station," he cried in anger.

"Who are you anyway? Why are you loitering in this vicinity? Whoever gave you permission to go about here with your Bible preaching? I arrest you right now!"

For an answer I drew forth my Mission Statute, duly registered by the people's Commisar of Internal Affairs. He glanced at the Imperial seals and signatures of the highest officials of the government, and at last this seemed to silence

him. Shrugging his shoulders he handed the papers back to me.

"I am very much surprised Comrade Glazov at your excitement regarding this matter," I calmly proceeded. "You can see for yourself that I am doing nothing outside the law. I have legal permission to remove the literature; and as for travelling in this vicinity preaching the Gospel, I have a right to do so, not only here but all over the country with the same purpose in view. Permission has been granted me by the Central authorities. Furthermore, I am not loitering here for Russia is my home land. When I consider you and your activities here, I naturally wonder why it is that you do not return to your native land—Hungary. You mentioned a car specially ordered for loading this literature. It would seem a good idea to me if you would now load yourself into it and go home to your own country," I concluded—half in joke to the officer, who seemed to be quieting down a bit. "This literature we will ourselves load on wagons and take it away."

Glazov, having perfect command of the German language, had pretended to be from that nation, so thus far he had played a two-faced treacherous role, showing himself sometimes a great friend of the German colonists by having gained their confidence, then again turning into their bitterest enemy and betraying many. The unfortunate inhabitants therefore trembled before him as he ruthlessly tyrannized over them. Now, being successfully withstood, he kept shifting from one foot to the other. I came to the

conclusion after meeting such people day after day that psychologically a trembling placating role is not successful when dealing with them. Proportionately as the plaintiff becomes more humble, the more fierce and infuriated is their demeanor, while the more fearless and straightforward one's actions, the quicker their fury is abated and the raging lions are changed into veritable lambs.

This method worked in this instance and had the desired cooling effect on the infuriated official. Although, in the last analysis, the victorious result was only because the cause was the Lord's, and His power compelled even His enemy to be finally silenced.

On the wagons (which after a few hours arrived from a neighboring village) we loaded fourteen thousand six hundred pounds of literature, which subsequently was distributed by the Tent Mission over the whole land.

From our inmost hearts we thanked God for this unexpected gift, which He had provided for us through His children, in this period of Gospel literature famine. When these stores were threatened with destruction, He sent us the necessary authority that we might distribute them to the needy population—for whom Christ died. Thus the Mission became the instrument in God's hand to fulfill His purpose and do His will.

XL

WORK AND HARDSHIP GO HAND IN HAND

THE Mission work continued, and God's blessing and timely aid appeared often in tangible form. The number of workers however, was steadily decreasing. First the famine raged in the northern parts of the land and in the year 1921 it's dread grip embraced the southern parts (where were most of the homes of our workers.) As the Mission received no financial aid from any quarter and all the members worked without any remuneration, it became expedient for our married brethren to look after their families in this crisis, and if possible provide the barest necessities of life.

With the advent of spring (1921) only one small group of missionaries (a mere handful of five souls) could go forth and sow the Gospel message in virgin soil.

Getting into the vehicles, ready for departure, our friends and relatives accompanied us. We were receiving good wishes and loving blessings together with some good-natured jokes. For this occasion was one in a lifetime considering that it was only a fortnight since my marriage to my sister in Christ and fellow member in our Mission (Katherine Enns). So now our friends

were joyously wishing us an unclouded honeymoon. These gay wishes were somewhat counterbalanced by the following remark: "Traveling these days one may well expect a bitter honeymoon rather than a honeyed one."

The first day of our journey ended safely. We traveled some thirty-five verst and stopped at the village known as Slatkaja Balka or "Sweet Valley" for the night. Here we conducted a blessed meeting marked by a very good attendance. Following this we had a blessed after-meeting with the believers and seeking souls until far into the night.

On the second day, securing a team, we parted from our Christian friends and turned in the direction of Orechoff. Our object was to drive down to our center at Panjutino and from there begin the work which we had systematically laid out. To go by train was impossible as the railway system was completely demoralized. We had travelled some five verst when we met a wagon driving at a furious rate from the opposite direction. In front were seated five armed soldiers. To our extreme horror we saw that the wagon box behind them was loaded with at least twelve corpses—horribly mutilated and chopped with saber strokes. A stream of gore trickled behind.

"Fly, fly, save yourselves! The Mackno's! The Mackno's!" they cried to us in passing, leaving a cloud of dust and a bloody trail behind them as they disappeared at a gallop down into the valley. They were fleeing from Mackno's troopers, whom to meet was extremely dangerous.

The Christian friend who was driving our team suggested turning off the main road, and keeping to the valley's drive across country to a village which he knew was about three verst away. We turned, but it was too late! Before us from a neighboring valley rose a cloud of dust. "That must be they," was our driver's comment, "they always ride down the valleys to escape observation!" In a moment, on the rising knoll, appeared a number of horsemen galloping toward us. Only God Himself could save us now, and we silently prayed for protection.

"Halt, hands up!" thundered the galloping horsemen, presenting a formidable enough sight as they flourished their sabers which flashed in the sunlight.

"Who are you? Where are you going, and what for? Your papers!" rained on us in one stream of questions.

"We are evangelists, and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the villages. We are now going on to the city of Orechhoff to hold a Gospel meeting there this evening," I answered. "Pray allow us to lower our hands and we will get our papers for you."

"Nay, do not move," cried the commanding officer with a threatening oath. "We will get them ourselves," and troopers roughly searched us, went through our pockets and examined our papers while others looked through our packs.

"You may proceed!" was again roughly ordered after the search; "only not a word to the officials at Orechhoff if anyone should ask re-

garding the direction we took. Remember that or we will get you wherever you go!"

Spurring their mounts they disappeared down the valley to join their company. This was the first danger we had encountered this season, and coming the second day out, the first impulse seemed to suggest that it would be best for us to return and keep under cover in our homes. But God's visible help and defense in this critical moment spoke louder to our souls "Lo, I am with you alway," so, cheered and comforted, we drove onward.

And thus journeying from place to place, often on foot, then again sometimes given a friendly lift by our Christian friends, we went on preaching the Gospel, distributing religious literature among the inhabitants, as well as dispensing medical aid to those who were sick.

To pitch our tent for the meetings was still impossible. Though the civil war was over, and the Soviet government was now established in the land, yet the southern part of Russia was still thickly infested with various warring and marauding bands who terrorized the country and conducted a ruthless guerilla warfare with the presiding powers. Often from revenge they massacred Soviet officials who had been unjust and cruel.

Not far from Pavlograd we were eye-witnesses of one of these guerilla invasions. When nearing the big village of "W", where we planned to hold a number of meetings, we were met by one of Mackno's squad. A number of horsemen came toward us, closely questioned us and examined our papers, then commanding us to

stay here for half an hour and not drive into the village (which orders we were glad to obey) they departed. In a few minutes the whole squad (swinging out in a crescent on the main road) at a furious pace charged into the village and we lost sight of them. Shortly we heard the unmistakable fire of machine guns, intermingled with a chorus of rifle and revolver shots while grenade explosions shook the air.

Our half hour of waiting was scarcely over when all was again quiet. The bandits like a whirlwind had gone to the other side of the village. The Soviet county headquarters had suffered that time. It was laid waste and a number of the officials—taken unawares, were either shot to death or hacked to pieces with saber strokes.

Considering these circumstances it was out of the question for us to pitch our tents on some prominent spot. So leaving them behind we journeyed without them, but not without regret as their shelter would have been most welcome. Nevertheless, in spite of the conditions, every day, even during the busy summer season, we held two or three meetings and had many helpful interviews with various eager, truth-seeking souls.

The Christians in the villages, notwithstanding the great privation and famine conditions in the land, helped us materially as well as in organizing our meetings. Everywhere was felt a great need of spiritual food for unbelievers, that they might be brought to repentance, and for believers that their spiritual lives might be strengthened and deepened.

XLI

SATAN'S CONSTANT OPPOSITION THE PLOT OF THE ENEMY

THERE was not a single village where eager, truth seeking souls did not turn to the Lord, and there was also not a place where Satan did not raise his barriers to ruin our work. Sometimes this was apparent in the sly, secret measures we encountered, and again he would come to the front in unmistakable appearance as "a roaring lion."

Arriving at the vilage of "L", near the city of Pavlograd, we found that here the Gospel had never been preached. The village authorities gave us permission to hold a meeting in the school-house, and the teacher even got the building ready for us.

All was now ready, and it was getting on toward evening when the peasants, ending their daily work, could now attend the meeting.

After earnest and united prayer we left our lodgings (which were about a mile outside the village, the home of a Christian family who had kindly taken us in) and departed for the village. Singing along the main thoroughfare we neared the school-house. Ordinarily singing would act as a magnet and draw an immense crowd in our direction, but here the result was the opposite; not a soul was seen. Usually the children were

the first to crowd around and play the role of leading heralds, but here they seemed to have been effaced from the scene. As this was an entirely new experience we were naturally filled with considerable apprehension. Everything around the schoolhouse was perfectly quiet.

It was a warm summer evening, and staying-outside we continued to sing, but not a soul came near the schoolhouse; in fact one could not see the least bit of the usual activity anywhere, not even around the homes nor farm-yards.

Time sped on and light faded into darkness. Further waiting appeared to be in vain, so sad at heart, and uncertain as to the cause of this strange and unexpected silence, we decided to return to our lodgings. Wishing the teacher (who was also silent) and his family "good-night" and testifying for our Saviour we started homeward.

An ominous silence reigned. The streets were deserted and the houses seemed abandoned as well. Considerably surprised, we were drawing near the end of the village (only a few more houses when we would be out in the open) when suddenly from behind us a loud and fearful noise broke the stillness of the night. Pandemonium broke loose from the houses on both sides of the street where people had been lying in ambuscade. Now with loud cries the villagers swooped down upon us.

"There they are—the antichrists! They are devils agitating our vicinity! Ah, ha, we will get you now! Strike them down, the perverters! Beat them!" These vituperative epithets were

accompanied with cries, screams and stones while clubs and sticks whistled past our heads. We looked back, and by the light of the moon saw a fearful sight! The dark riotous crowd was coming swiftly down upon us; but God was our shield and our defense.

The fusillade whistled past and over our heads but none took effect. We quietly proceeded on our way, but every moment the crowd became more furious and the distance between us was fast diminishing; in a few more minutes they would be able to surround us and like savage beasts tear us to pieces.

Viewing the situation, I told my wife and the other workers to hasten on (which they refused to do) while I quickly turned to meet the mob. "What do you want with us?" I cried out in a clear ringing voice. They stopped short, as if rooted to the spot, at this unexpected turn of affairs. "Again I ask you, what do you want with us? Perhaps you are pausing to reflect what will be the consequences of your actions! Who emboldened you to do such a thing? I suppose your priest!"

Stillness reigned; not a person stirred. Taking advantage of this I turned with my companions and walked away. A few more stones followed in our wake but the crowd did not follow us any further.

Reaching our lodgings in safety (yet exceedingly sorrowful) we knelt and prayed that God would have mercy upon this village who had rejected His Word, and save them for His name's sake.

After some conversation with our warm hearted hosts we prepared to go to bed. Suddenly an unusual noise attracted our attention. Approaching the house was a party of young men, who entered, apologized for the actions of the mob and earnestly requested us to read to them the Word of God.

It was about midnight when we commenced this home meeting, which continued till the morning star shone in the brightening dawn. The newcomers listened attentively to the Word, and plied us with numerous questions. The Lord was wonderfully exalted and glorified—even this night which had commenced so unpropitiously.

Thinking over the queer experience and proceedings of that evening's reception, we recalled a strange visit we had in the day-time. As soon as we had reached our lodgings there came from the village a middle-aged hunch-backed woman who had an evil and cunning expression on her face. Appearing greatly interested in our activities, she inquired if it was our intention to stay long in the village, and carefully looking over the religious literature which we were distributing among the people, she hastened away. We found out afterwards that she had been sent to us (as a spy) by the Greek Catholic priest. Returning to the village (and instructed by the priest) she had visited every house and organized the ambushade. Having great influence among the villagers (by virtue of being a midwife, and further possessed—as the villagers thought—of great knowledge, not unlinked with darker pow-

ers) and being a close friend of the priest, she had for a long time been preparing the people to give us this kind of reception. A year before this same ill favored woman had instigated a similar ambuscade against me. Happening to be alone then in another village, led by her the infuriated mob was ready to tear me to pieces! That time help came from the believers who, cognizant of the plot, had informed the authorities about it. The police arriving on the scene had quelled the mob. I now remembered that both attacks had been instigated by the same evil emissary; this queer hunch-backed woman. Her plot was again brought to nought in an unexpected manner, as God Himself had defended us.



XLII

EVEN THE ENEMIES BOW AT HIS FEET

VARIOUS instances of opposition, as cited above, happened again and again in the course of our Mission work, and some were even crowned with interesting developments, which really served to fill our hearts with greater devotion and gratitude to our Divine Shepherd. Where persecution was the fiercest, there more and more souls turned to Christ, and the most hardened and infuriated adversaries were often brought in repentance to His feet.

Here is one incident which occurred during our winter's work. Visiting one village after another we (together with Brother M. K.) reached the village of Otcheretavatoje. One man received us into his home and gave us permission to hold a number of meetings in his house.

The Gospel message had never before been proclaimed in this village, and the inhabitants now listened to the story of Christ with great eagerness and gave to it undivided attention. The room was packed to the limit, and even the corridor was crowded, while eager listeners assembled outside the window.

On hearing of our meetings the village priest commenced to turn the people against us. During his Sunday morning service in the church, he addressed his parishioners as follows:

“My good Orthodox Catholic Christians, these are bad times for the last days are upon us. It is written in the Scriptures that the antichrist will come in the last times. Who would have thought however, that this was said even of our village; who could have imagined that they would appear among us! Behold! it has come upon us. The antichrists have appeared. Just note carefully, ye people, how they draw the multitudes by flattery into their heretic faith! It is sad that every one who comes under the dreadful influence of their meetings, will never again be a true Catholic Christian and return to that faith, but is captivated and drawn, as by a net into apostasy! Wickedness, great wickedness! Beware my parishioners; be faithful to our Mother Church and do not attend these antichristian meetings. Do not let your children go, especially you young people,” said he, turning to the young men standing near the chancel, “be careful; flee from the wicked! Just see what a snare these heretics have set for you. They have started their meetings right alongside your clubs. Now will be an end to your merry making for they will ruin everything for you, while some they will captivate. Oh, if there could be found some devout, zealous defenders of our Holy Catholic church to save her from outrage, and drive these perverters from our village!” In conclusion he exhorted: “I invite you young people, who are to be the future defenders of Catholicism, to come to my home after service, or toward evening, and then we will talk more fully of these perverters and I will tell you still more.”

The group of young men who gathered at

the priest's home spent at least three hours in secret conference; had a specially good supper served to them, at which time the home-made liquor flowed freely. After intoxication had taken possession of their better judgment, the "Shepherd" told them that everyone who killed a heretic would receive forgiveness of all his sins, and would have a place in Paradise. "Charms, unholy charms, these heretics possess. My friends, they will captivate you all if you do not dispose of them soon!" With many like words the priest continued to stimulate his youthful parishioners to participate in crime.

"And what, Good Father, if accidentally we should hurt one of them, for it is sometimes hard to stop one's hand after it has once become loose," questioned one of the young men as he drained a full glass of the fiery liquor. "Will we not be brought before God to answer for the consequences?" "Tut, consequences indeed," returned the crafty priest. "Who will bother to bring you to judgment in these revolutionary times; and before God—why that is my own business. I will wipe out everything clean by praying for you; besides it is right and holy to fight in defense of the church."

"Ah, everything will be famous, Father, we will give them a good thrashing, and your lads will not betray the matter," said another looking on the priest in a swimming drunken gaze. "We have done many things in the dark, we will do this also. Hey, my lads, let's charge these anti-christs!" striking the table so hard that the glasses and dishes crashed to the floor in shattered fragments.

Thus the drinking party continued for hours in boisterous levity and foolish boasting.

It was evening, and in spite of the priest's warnings the villagers flocked to the meeting. The house was crowded to its capacity as the people stood in a densely packed mass and listened in solemn awe to the story of the suffering Christ and His cruel death on the Cross of Calvary for the sins of all the human race. Deep sighs broke from their lips; tears dimmed the eyes of many and the power of God's Word was manifest when suddenly loud noises, shuffling and voluble profanity was heard in the corridor. A number of drunken young men were forcing themselves into the room. At the window was also heard loud noise and swearing. Armed with sticks and clubs the drunken mob had driven the listeners from the windows, and confusion reigned as they tried to force themselves into the crowded room toward the table where I stood. The room was so densely packed that their advance was impeded, especially as some members of the audience attempted to push them back.

Unable to move forward, one of the mob (with loud curses) hurled a huge iron missile in my direction, over the heads of the audience, which extinguished the light as it struck the wall. In the resultant darkness the confusion momentarily increased.

"Beat them! Drag them out on the snow! We will finish them now!" roared the drunken mob, striking at the walls and windows of the house.

Perfectly quiet we stood at the table, trusting in Him without whose will not a hair of our heads would fall.

The friendly visitors still attempted to hold back the onslaught. At length the master of the house brought a light. The confusion had somewhat abated, although to continue the meeting seemed impossible as the audience (not wishing to witness the violence—or cruel murder which threatened us) began to disperse.

At the door and windows still stood the armed and riotous mob. At last in the dwelling remained only about ten persons who were this evening's new converts and now desired to surrender their hearts to God in prayer, together with the house-holder and his family.

Kneeling, with many tears, they implored God's forgiveness for their sins and transgressions. In deepest sincerity these petitions, singly and together with others, poured from their hearts. The power of God's Spirit seemed present here as in a visible form.

The last sighs, the last prayers of the repentant ones ceased, and then Brother K. reverently thanked God for these newly converted souls who had returned, like lost sheep, to the Heavenly fold. During this time the drunken young men at the door and windows had ceased their activities, held back as by some invisible force. Brother K. concluded his prayer of thankfulness by saying: "Oh God, Thou Who art Eternal love; Thou Who hast given Thyself and hast suffered death for us, forgive even these who now persecute us, for Thy name's sake, and turn them to

Thy light. May they realize Thy mercy and goodness. Forgive them for they do not know what they do." Suddenly the drunken men burst into the room interrupting his prayer. "We know well what we are doing," hoarsely cried the leader of the band. "We will slay these anti-christs!" The new converts, the householder and we received a few ringing blows. One of the band, swinging his club to strike the Brother who had prayed last, accidentally knocked down the light and darkness again reigned in the room. The fear of striking their own partisans (or perhaps their awakened conscience) compelled the mob to disperse. When another light was finally brought in, we found ourselves alone with the new converts and our hosts.

After one more day's work, strengthening the new converts in this village, we went further. Some two weeks later, while working in a village about twenty verst away, we received an urgent entreaty to return again to Otchero-tovatoje. Returning, the very first persons to meet us were the party of young men who had conducted the riot during our previous visit. After our departure, what they heard of the sermon and prayers that night, together with the heavy sense of crime which had fallen upon them, would not allow them to rest in peace. The blessed result was that all of them were converted, and received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Friend. Now they fairly embraced us, and with tears besought our forgiveness for their violence.

"Forgive us, dear Brethren, forgive, for we

feel that now God has forgiven us too. Oh, how true it is that we did not know what we were doing; that we were even persecuting the Lord Himself as we ill-treated you. We believed what the priest told us and thought we were doing a righteous thing!"

They recounted to us the substance of the priest's warning address during the service in church, and what subsequently happened during the conference at the priest's home.

Whole-heartedly granting them full forgiveness, strengthening them in the Word, and returning profound thanks to our Redeemer and Lord for what He had wrought, we went further. How true it was in this instance that He who hath been forgiven much loveth much.

They who offer the most violent opposition sometimes are the first to repent, and are often more sincere in their loyalty and devotion to God.



XLIII

THE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD

THE fulfillment of our Lord's promise to His disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world", we experienced many times during our work. He who had sent us to carry spiritual bread to the famishing souls of men, daily aided and strengthened us.

The spiritual famine was evident throughout all the land. The various nationalities presented one unmistakable picture of lost sheep having no shepherd. Especially was there an urgent need for spiritual work among some of the German colonists residing in Russia. They were persecuted by the authorities, hated by the surrounding population, and last but by no means least, left in many places almost entirely without any religious leadership or spiritual help. Many of their pastors in the time of the great World War had been removed and exiled on the grounds of belonging to the German nation. Others during the awful Revolution and time of Civil War had either been slain, or had fled from the country. At that time the head administration of the Lutheran church had been removed from Russian boundaries by the separation of Latvia, and the unfortunate colonists were now truly like sheep without a shepherd.

Going through the Russian villages we had always visited the German ones along our way, and had given them every possible spiritual aid. Here is one incident which occurred during our stay among the German Lutherans in the district of Sinelnikovo.

We were told of a nearby German colony, and after asking God's gracious blessing on the project, we sent two of our brethren ahead to arrange for suitable quarters in which to hold our meetings. Permission was granted for us to use the village "House of Prayer," but we were informed that there was no hope of an audience on a week day as even on Sundays not more than five or six persons were in the habit of going to church.

About five in the afternoon our group arrived in the village, and we rang the church bell as a summons to the service, then we waited for results. These turned out to be the most unexpected, for putting aside their work, the villagers flocked en masse to the "House of Prayer." Soon the room was crowded to its limit, so we commenced our meeting.

The congregation, with great eagerness, listened to every word, even the children, (generally the "noisy folk") sat silent and attentive. Interchanging expositions and prayer with the singing of Gospel hymns, the meeting progressed, while many in the assembly bowed their heads and silently wept. Before an hour had passed however, there occurred a circumstance which threatened to break up the meeting. An electric storm of unusual violence arose, and as the roof of the house was in a very bad condition (be-

cause of poverty and neglect) the rain descended in torrents on the heads of the congregation, drenching them thoroughly, but they merely changed their positions slightly and continued to listen.

At the close of the service I invited the congregation to step up to the pulpit and receive religious literature, tracts and booklets in the German language. Here again was an occasion to note the heart-rending spiritual need of the population as trembling hands of aged folk, strong muscular ones of the middle-aged and even small childish ones were eagerly stretched forth to receive the donation.

"Oh, please give me something, if ever so little, that I may read about God in my native tongue," was heard in pleading entreaty on every side.

It was evening and the rain had stopped. The risen moon flooded with glorious light the once beautiful homes, which were surrounded by orchards and gardens. The greater part of the congregation accompanied us as we went to our lodgings in a nearby Russian village, and many of them were in tears. "Never before in my whole life have I heard a real Gospel sermon, not even when our pastor used to visit us, and the last six years we have not heard anything," said one. "Please do come to us again and stay for a longer time," pleaded others. Our hearts ached as we left this village.

Oh, may God send His aid to this poor, hungry people who are dying a slow spiritual death, yet thirsting for life and eager to receive God and His message of light and love.

To continue further work in this village was at present impossible. Weariness from long journeys, privations, famine and constant exposure, together with the wretched food, caused our workers to fall ill so that it was necessary to curtail work altogether for a number of days.



XLIV

ISRAEL THIRSTING TO HEAR OF CHRIST

SOMEWHAT recovered from our illness and commencing our work again, we reached the city of Pavlograd. Knowing that here the Gospel of Christ had never been preached, we prayed God to open an avenue whereby we could proclaim His Divine Message of Salvation among the inhabitants. Finding in the city one Christian man (who had recently moved in from another place) we secured temporary lodgings with him and his family and commenced our work.

Negotiating with the authorities we were granted the use of two buildings in which to conduct our meetings; the first a club of some special regiment then quartered in the city, and the other the Jewish Institute for Higher Learning. At both places for a number of days, we held our Gospel meetings, and crowds attended, among them being a goodly number of Jews. The Jewish Institute (now under control of the Soviet authorities) was situated near the Synagogue, and in those days they were holding a series of special gatherings on account of the visit to the city of a Zionist agent. When the meeting in the Synagogue was over, ours commenced in their Institute and the whole Jew-

ish audience turned out en masse to attend our evangelistic services.

Many of the sons of Israel, who had formerly regarded Christ and the Gospel with open hostility, now listened with evident interest and great eagerness to the story of the Crucified One, who was their rejected Messiah. After the meeting many would come up asking numerous and varied questions.

"I am greatly struck with wonder because I have never yet heard a sermon which bore that interpretation of Christ", commented one of the elders of the Synagogue while conversing with me. "In reality we believe in the One and the same God, and have the same hope in common. What the visiting Zionist said was similar to your address. True, I don't agree with all of your points regarding Christ, yet I confess it is well to get both view-points regarding this matter. Why don't you arrange to hold your meetings here continually? I think that among the Jews you would find a constant attendance, and I know that our people would surely aid you in such an undertaking."

It was somewhat strange and surprising to hear such words from an elder of the Jewish Synagogue. At first I entertained doubts as to the sincerity of his declarations, thinking that it might merely be a trick to find out if it was our secret intention (in view of the permission we had obtained from the authorities) to appropriate their Institute wholly for our meetings: but on the following day I was fully convinced of his sincerity.

During our meeting a great many Jews came in and listened attentively to every word. The sermon was drawing to a close with the invitation to turn to God and Christ when a sudden noise was heard in the audience: a young Hebrew man sank to his knees and poured out his soul to God in prayer. "Oh, forgive me my Lord! My Messiah! I have searched so long for Thee, but I did not know nor trust Thee! Now from this day I want to be Thy disciple! Help me to follow Thee!" The Jews looked at one another, and perplexity was printed on their faces, but they did not regard the repentant member with dark opposing hostility and fury, as was their usual custom in similar cases. It was now wholly lacking. Their great thirst to hear of Christ is the clearest and most convincing evidence that Israel is being prepared more and more to receive Him as their Messiah. Oh, may God send His workers to labor for the people of Israel. The dry bones of that scattered nation are moving and joining each to its own member. Flesh and sinews appear! May that day soon come when, according to Ezekiel's wonderful prophecy the immense host of Israel shall rise up at last and gaze as one man on Him whom they pierced!

XLV

EVEN THE ENEMIES HELP

ONE of the most practical exhortations to believers, which we find in the Word of God, is this: "Patience is needed for you my Brethren to fulfill the will of God and to receive the promise." And again: "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved." This often applies to our every day prosaic lives, and especially in overcoming difficulties attendant upon it, the truth of which we experienced many times during our evangelistic campaigns.

After a few days of blessed work in Pavlograd we bade farewell to our newly found friends and departed for the village of Andrejevka, which was some seventeen verst from the city.

It was a torrid July day and the rays of the unclouded sun beat down upon us like flaming shafts. Not the least bit of wind stirred the fiery air which was like the breath of a furnace. The sand of the road was as hot as living coals. It seemed instead of walking that we fairly swam through the steaming air. As we did not have any leather shoes we were obliged to wear our wooden sandals, which afforded but sorry protection to our feet which were burned and blistered by the hot sand. They were red and rough like the bark of a tree. Our strength ebbed with every moment until the knapsacks containing

our necessities were like leaden weights upon our shoulders. Twice, thrice we tried to rest, but the burning sand so scorched our legs that we were obliged to rise and battle on. We looked at one another almost in despair for it seemed as if we would never reach our destination; but at the same time some inward voice seemed to whisper to our hearts: "Patience is needed if you would do the will of God and receive the promise." Lacking it ourselves we asked God for patience and strength and He did not fail us; our journey was at length over, and surrounded by believers (a small group of evangelical Christians who were at this place) we rested in the shade of a cherry orchard. How we thanked and praised God for His aid as we conversed with these friends there assembled. Thus in a fuller and deeper sense will end the thorny pathway of every Christian who patiently endures to the glorious end. That will be eternal rest in the fadeless beauty of God's Paradise, where we will enjoy the unending fellowship with the redeemed.

Again that day we had occasion to note that God can even compel His enemies to protect His servants. After a short rest, the entire group commenced their work. Securing permission from the authorities to hold our meetings in the village schoolhouse, we distributed tracts along the way and invited the villagers to the meeting. Singing as we went we at length reached the building and opened the service. The people of the village heartily responded, and leaving their various tasks a large crowd followed us.

Some of the more eager ones hurried ahead to secure their places in the building. Seeing

such a hearty response we thanked God that our harrowing journey of the day had not been in vain; that here also there were hearts eager to hear His word; and that we had the inestimable privilege of being His witnesses. But the ancient adversary of God and man did not sleep! The Greek Catholic priest, watching from the window of his home, saw the crowd in the square in front of the schoolhouse, and learning the cause of the gathering hastened to request the Soviet officials (with whom he seemed to be in favor) to close the schoolhouse and forbid the meeting.

I had commenced the service when unexpectedly I was summoned to the county headquarters to again present my papers for another examination. After the chairman had looked them over, he said, "I cannot give you permission for your gatherings. I made a mistake in the first place in allowing you the building, but now I forbid your meeting. Send the people away and leave the village immediately or you will all be arrested and put into the county jail."

Feeling exceedingly sorry for the hungry souls who had left everything to assemble to hear God's Word, also feeling that some underhanded work was going on (as well as being somewhat accustomed to such threats) I decided to hold to the rights given me in the initial permission.

"We have just arrived from a city where the President of the Executive Committee gave us full permission to hold our meetings, (even arranging about the building for our use) consequently your unexpected refusal greatly surprises me! Mr. Chairman," I continued, looking at him.

My gaze lighted upon a desk telephone standing before the secretary's place: "Ah, this is fine!" I ejaculated, "You have telephone connection with the city, so we can call them up and speak with the President about this matter."

"I will not permit you to call him up," cried the chairman in a sudden passion.

"Oh, in that case I will not need your permission," I quietly rejoined, "for it is evident that it is not the laws of the land you defend but your own personal interests."

"You are right," said the secretary, suddenly taking part in our conversation. "This is nothing but the personal interests of our priest! It is not the laws of the land, because yesterday (even before your arrival) we received orders from the city's headquarters to grant you full permission for your gatherings; but in this instance the priest had too much influence with our chairman."

"I forbid you to hold any gathering," cried the chairman quite beside himself with rage. The secretary however, without any further ado took down the receiver and was in a moment connected with the city's authorities.

To our question we received the following highly interesting answer: "You may freely conduct your meetings as long as you like, and if anyone has a grievance against you they can show up here with it and we will settle the matter. We are hostile to all religion and tender preferences to none. We do not prohibit if the priest holds his meetings in the church and he should not interfere or forbid others to hold their meetings in suitable quarters."

With manifold blessings the meetings continued several days and were attended by vast throngs of people. Joyously we praised God for His abundant mercies and for making even His enemies to befriend and help us. The believers of the village and the new converts also rejoiced with us.



XLVI

THE MIRACULOUS RESTORATION OF THE IKONS BECOMES A NEW OBSTACLE IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL

TOGETHER with other impediments which Satan raised against us in our work of spreading the Gospel that summer, we were confronted with an altogether new one which was the miraculous "Restoration of the Ikons" (or Sacred Pictures). This phenomenon became a powerful weapon in the hands of the Greek Catholic clergy against the Gospel message and its bearers.

Often after the meeting many of the villagers would come up to us with texts from the Holy Scripture, written by their priest, which spoke of "the last times" and "the coming of Christ;" especially those recorded in Matthew the 24th chapter, where our Lord in warning His disciples of the last times, speaks of wars, famines, pestilences, false Christs, false prophets accompanied by signs and wonders. On the authority of such verses the clergy (calling attention to the calamities which Russia was then experiencing) explained to the people that everything predicted by Christ was now being fulfilled in the land, such as wars and famine, while they called us travelling missionaries the false prophets and false Christs. They said the restoration of the

ikons was a direct sign from God to warn the people not to believe these false teachers but instead to cling to the Greek Catholic church, her clergy and the "Saints" (who were pictured on these sacred ikons) none of which these travelling heretics would acknowledge or worship.

Thus these village folk, after being instructed by the priest, would come to us in deep perplexity seeking our explanation as to those false teachers and false Christs as well as about the restoration of the ikons, which this summer occurred so often that in almost every village it was brought to our notice.

At first we paid but little attention to these rumors of the restorations, thinking them merely some clever trickery which was being played on the superstitious credulity of the peasants. Soon however, we were bound to admit that they were based on solid fact which could not be refuted; the faded pictures were bright again.

In a certain village an entire family was converted to Christ. Worshipping the sacred pictures, was to them a thing of the past; but some of the old ikons still remained in the house for awhile after the rest had been put out of sight or destroyed. One day the family noticed that the upper half of one of the pictures, which was quite black from age, was bright and shining as if new, while the other half was still black. There could not be any deceit in this house as the whole family were Christians and considered it a sin to do honor to a picture, or pray before it. It was equally impossible that anyone outside of the house could have

cleaned or repainted it as someone of the family was always at home. It really looked as if something had occurred miraculously—without the aid of man. It was now necessary to find a solution to the phenomenon—which was clearly outside the ordinary, as it was creating no small stir, among both the villagers and the town's people, who fully believed that they were restored by the power of God.

The Soviet officials wanted to prevent the spread the belief that it was miraculous, and sent a commission of specialists to investigate the matter, but they were unable to explain it. The newspapers also took up the gauntlet and published comments, explanations and solutions. But all to no avail for the people crowded en masse to the worship of the renewed ikons, bringing with them an immense amount of gifts and offerings which was a good income for the clergy. A little was also given to the owners of the renewed pictures.

But, after a short time, the Lord wonderfully gave us a full explanation of the seemingly miraculous restorations. Unexpectedly, and as if by chance, we were staying with a Christian family in the village of Nickolajevka near Pavlograd, when my attention was caught by a photograph hanging on the wall. It was their family picture which was framed in the once gilded frame of an ikon. "Why did you put your photograph in that frame?" I inquired of my hostess who had just entered the room. "You know it is liable to be a stumbling-block to the Catholic people, is it not?"

"Oh, no," she answered with a smile, "Our people are not so easily offended for they do not believe any more in the sanctity of the ikons, take for instance this restoration which has come into fashion, nobody in our village believes in it, not even the Catholics. They say the priest must have bribed someone to clean them up, or replace with a new one all their pictures and then pretend it was miraculously restored and broadcast that statement. Here in Nickolajevka we have not had one instance of a restoration, and I do not think we will have one either. It is four years since we were converted and I had burnt up the ikons, but this frame looked so nice (and exactly fitted our family portrait) so that I was prevailed upon to save it, and now it contains the living instead of the dead saints." With this she took down the picture to give me a better view of it and began to wipe the dust from the dark frame with a cloth.

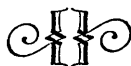
"Oh, what is this!" she suddenly exclaimed: "See it has become new in my hands! Imagine me just saying that such a thing is impossible; evidently the ikons are restored and I have said it was a deceitful allegation!"

I looked at the frame which she held in her hand; the frame which a minute before had been dull and dark but now glistened as if it was newly gilded, and said: "Will you please let me see that cloth?" and she complied with my request. The cloth revealed the dark dust of decomposed metal intermixed with faintest gilt; so the dark decomposed surface of the metal had been loosened and she had wiped it off like a coating of dust. The bright metal beneath now made the

frame look absolutely new. Thus the secret of the miraculous renewal of the ikons was fully revealed. The whole process of renewal was as follows:

The artists who painted these pictures of the saints, had put on two or three coats of color. Being brought to the little cottages and hanging there for some tens of years in the so-called "Holy corners," which were damp and dark, the pictures had gradually lost all their color and brilliance so that one saw only a dark unattractive surface. Years passed and the sacred pictures still hung in their damp seclusion until at length came this hot summer. The heat penetrated the damp clay walls of the peasant homes so that they became dry like tinder. The darkened, damp and decomposed top layer of color on the ikons also became completely dry, and like a dark fine powder gradually loosened and fell off, revealing the bright fresh layer of color underneath, which was as bright and shining as if it had just come from the artist's hand. A religious peasant happening to look into the darkened sacred corners, where hung his "Holy Pictures" (possibly inherited from his grandfather) would be suddenly struck with wonder as he beheld the picture fresh and brilliant again. Running to inform the priest of the miracle, the news spread over the whole vicinity; a whole procession of church dignitaries appeared upon the scene and crowds gathered. Gifts and offerings were brought resulting in a religious celebration, which continued (with no small flow of intoxicating liquor) for a number of days. During this time the clergy, taking advantage of the situation,

loaded their pockets, while the peasants, (who should have been busy harvesting their crop) had lost not only their money but also their time which bitterly increased their privation and want.



XLVII

"GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS"

THE "Miraculous Restoration of the Ikons" proved a great weapon in the hands of the clergy against us. I will cite one instance of how they employed it to hinder our spreading the Gospel. While working in the Province of Kharkow we came to the hamlet of Nestlejewka where a number of Christian families resided. After holding a few blessed meetings they suggested that we visit a neighboring village where the Gospel had never been heard. Securing permission from the authorities for the gathering, our next move was to secure a suitable place for it. A friendly peasant offered the use of his large barn which we prepared for the meeting.

The day happened to be one of the mid-summer holidays. Singing on the way we proceeded to the appointed place, while two of our members on either side distributed religious literature to the villagers who crowded into the street, and at the same time invited them to attend the meeting.

The whole village was astir and when we reached the barn it was filled to its limit. It was only with the greatest difficulty that we could make our way through the crowd to our place at

the end of the building where, instead of a pulpit stood a table.

Our meeting commenced, and the audience, having never heard the story of God's love for humanity, listened with tremendous interest. The power of God was very manifest and many wept. Before long however, a loud noisy mob entered the building and with shrill cries interrupted the service. During our walk through the village to the meeting place, a hostile party had emerged from certain houses and had cried to our distributors of literature, "Do not come near us, you antichrists; we do not want your books, we will not read them anyway. Get out of our village! Whoever invited you here anyway, Hey? You only come to pervert our people. No wonder our Father—the priest—warned us against you antichrists!"

Nevertheless, having assembled, they now hurried in to disturb our meeting. Cries and profanity broke on the scene, while loud questions of various import rained on us. One of the mob, pressing through the crowd toward me cried with a loud voice: "See herè, you had better explain to us by what power our sacred ikons are restored, and then perhaps we will hear you further."

Knowing well the aim of this mob, which was sent by the priests to investigate, I avoided giving a direct reply to the question, but continued to speak of Christ Who alone is able to cleanse and purify sin infested souls. But my questioner, getting bolder every moment, loudly insisted on a direct answer.

"Tell us whose power is it? Is it a miracle

performed by God as a visible sign to us or something else? We want to know!"

The crowd breathlessly (and with somewhat of a guarded front) awaited the answer. The situation was taking rather an unpropitious turn for we well knew if we gave the true reason of the restorations, the man would have gained his point, and would raise popular feeling against us, and (what was of greater importance) against the message of Christ which we had sought to sow in their hearts. To say however, that it was a miracle of God would be a patent falsehood, and would merely strengthen the hold of superstition on the peasant mind. There was nothing else to do but to give a clear and concise explanation of the true reason for the phenomenon.

The result was exactly what we had anticipated, the peasants, not even allowing us to finish the explanation raised a dreadful cry of, "Heretics, false prophets, false Christs! Christ Himself warned us against you and spoke of your appearance in the last days; now here you have come!"

To quiet the crowd we attempted to sing but to no avail as all sound was drowned in the roar of the mob. To offer explanations which would appeal to reason and common sense was also out of the question. The crowd, (who but a moment since had been in deep silence with tears of contrition in their eyes, listening attentively to the message of Christ) now rose as if beside itself and joined in the uproar.

We stood at the end of the barn, farthest from the exit, surrounded by this roaring mob, but quietly prayed to God for His protection in

this nearing crisis, for we saw a number encouraging the crowd to violence, while with every moment the noise and confusion increased.

Suddenly, one of the friendly villagers came near to us and said in a low voice, "Escape while it is yet possible! Try to get through the crowd singly toward the door, and leave the village for there is a plot on foot against you, that is why they asked the question so as to arouse the whole crowd to turn on you! Do hurry!"

Acting immediately upon this friendly advice, with great difficulty we picked our way through the excited crowd and gained the entrance, profoundly thankful for our escape. We went up the street and the crowd followed us far out of the village while they hurled stones and sticks in our wake.

In the midst of that seething mob we seemed to be transported to a scene two thousand years ago, when Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles bringing the first ray of light of the Gospel to Europe was opposed at Ephesus by the powers of darkness, who seeing their craft ruined by the message, raised a tremendous uproar against the Apostle. As in the book of Acts it is written: "And the whole city was filled with confusion," calling, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," now on the same principles had the clergy sought to rouse the crowd against us.

Finally the noise died down and they gave up the chase. We were now some distance from the village, and finding ourselves in a particularly lovely and secluded spot, bordered by fields of ripening grain, we knelt and poured out our hearts to God in thanksgiving for granting us the privi-

lege of witnessing for Him in that village, as well as for His protection from the mob. We concluded by praying that the Divine seed which had been sown that day might find some good ground in which to spring up and increase an hundred fold for the Lord's harvest.

"Oh Thou Who sendest us dew and rain; by Whose power alone the seed sown by man for his material needs springs into life and grows, bless with the dew of Thy Grace the spiritual seed which we have attempted to sow today." We bowed in adoration before Him Who made the heaven and the earth, while tears of joy and sorrow—alike—filled our eyes.

A few months later we received some news regarding this village which filled our hearts with joy. Soon after our visit a number of souls were converted, received baptism, and with the help of a nearby Christian church organized a church of their own in that village and were holding meetings. Our hearts filled with great gratitude and praise to God, we knelt and thanked Him for answered prayer and for His abundant blessing on our work. This event again plainly showed us that even the most humble and the smallest service for the Lord brings its results, according to His word:

"My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. 55:11.

His Word doth not return empty but is crowned with blessing, although often it is sown in soil that does not look at all promising for a

harvest. May the sowers of the Eternal Word be strong and very courageous and faint not before the storms of adversity.

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him,” says Ps. 126:6.



XLVIII

“ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR
GOOD”

MANY times during our work we gave thanks to God for some special manifestation of His grace and power, which changed the most insurmountable stumbling blocks (placed by Satan in our path) into stepping stones through which His name was ever glorified.

Soon after the events narrated in the last chapter, we experienced another special evidence of God's power in the year 1921. Toward the end of July nineteen-hundred and twenty-one, the land seemed to have settled down to comparative quiet since the various marauding bands had apparently ceased more or less their activities for awhile. We decided to again use our tents for our meetings, and made preparations to commence our work in the populous village of Petropavlovka, forty verst from Pavlograd.

Securing permission from the authorities to pitch our tent in the most frequented spot in the village (which proved to be the great square in the market-place) we posted announcements of the meetings.

When the day arrived for our opening service,

the German believers assembled from the Mennonite colony of Herzenberg. There also gathered a choir of youthful believers.

The first drawback which we experienced was when Brother D. R. (who had been commissioned to bring out our tent from our center, some eighty verst away) returned without the tent owing to the busy harvest season utilizing all the teams so that he could not secure one for this purpose. This was somewhat of a disappointment as the people were roused to enthusiasm and were naturally filled with pleasant anticipation. When the priest learned of our purpose to hold a series of meetings in that place he had sent out letters to his parishioners warning them not to attend any of the services in the tent. This fact served to arouse the curiosity of the people and made them all the more anxious to attend them. Inadvertently by this means the news of our intended gatherings was heralded far and wide.

An immense crowd gathered, to accommodate which the village believers' church (in which we had decided to hold our meetings in lieu of the absent tent) was far too small.

Going again to the authorities we secured permission to hold our meetings in one of the High schools, which happened to flank the courtyard of the Market-place and was exactly opposite the imposing structure of the Greek Catholic Cathedral. There we commenced our series of meetings which were largely attended. Even on Sunday the people left the cathedral service and came in crowds to our meetings, in spite of the priest's warning. Disobedience to the priest's mandate infuriated the opposer of the truth.

The villagers, having listened to the invectives which the priest heaped upon us (and after hearing God's Word) were whole-heartedly convinced of the falsity of the priest's accusations and were more and more convinced of the truth of the Gospel message.

At the last farewell meeting, after which we were to go to other places, an immense crowd gathered so that only half of them could be accommodated in the building. We were ready to commence the service when there arrived a party of men, accompanied by three members of the Militia, who ordered us not to hold any meeting but to immediately dismiss the crowd.

We were obliged to obey, but it made our hearts ache to be compelled to leave this eager waiting throng without a last testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we decided to make a last attempt to secure permission for the meeting before the people had scattered to other places.

This region was one of the late fighting zones and was still under martial law and under the direct military command of the squads and their officers who were quartered in the village. It was in their power to forbid the meeting—or otherwise.

Leaving Brother D. R. and the other workers with the waiting congregation, I hurried to the highest military Commandant of that region. When conducted into his office, I said "How does it happen, Comrade Commandant, that when you had already granted me full permission to hold our meetings—today the Militia has been dispatched to forbid the same? As this

was our farewell meeting in this vicinity, after which we were to take our departure, I am exceedingly pained regarding the matter and have therefore come to you with a final appeal for permission to go on with this farewell service. The crowd is waiting and eager to listen, and many have come from distant places."

The officer looked at me in a straightforward manner and evidently with no unfriendly feeling, and replied: "Personally I have nothing against you nor your meetings, I would even be pleased if you could hold more of them here as indirectly you co-operate with us in restoring order and in fighting against crime. Instead of turbulence and sedition you sow that which tends to make the people honest, peace-loving and gentle. I admit that fact, but today I could not help what has occurred but had to send the Militia to stop your meeting as the Orthodox Catholic clergy are working strongly against you here. They have influenced the civilian authorities of the village so that today I received a visit from the chairman of the community demanding that I put a stop to further meetings. It was based on the law as one of the statutes is that "no one is allowed to speak of God in any building dedicated to educational purposes." Therefore they set before me the grievance saying, "The authorities forbid the use of the schoolhouse for religious purposes for our own community, then why are the doors of the building flung open to these travelling persons to speak therein of God." So I had no alternative but to comply with their lawful demand. But listen, I have just had a 'phone call saying that the crowd is waiting there

and that they desire you to proceed with the meeting. Wishing to propitiate the crowd I will grant you permission to hold your meeting in the Market-place in the open air, only I hope there will not be any uproar. Nevertheless I am certainly interested to know what the Spiritual Shepherds of the flock will say when they see you holding your service alongside their cathedral. However, I give you permission to proceed and will take the responsibility upon myself. I will send a few members of my militia to keep everything in order," he concluded with a smile.

Thanking him heartily for these concessions I returned, and was met by an extraordinary sight. On an elevation, an immense crowd before him, stood Brother R. who with splendid and powerful eloquence was preaching of Christ the crucified, while behind the fence (which surrounded the cathedral) stood two priests with all their church elders and dignitaries. Whether they too were listening to the story of Christ (or merely gnashing their teeth in impotent rage at seeing their parishioners listening to the sermon) could not be determined. But one thing was evident that in spite of all their enmity and desire to stop the meetings, the Lord was exalted and glorified in a most wonderful manner.

When I left the office of the Military Commandant he immediately telephoned to the officers of the Militia saying that our meeting could proceed in the square, and instructing them to send there a number of militia to maintain order. Before I reached the square they had already arrived. Brother D. R., having received permis-

sion, lost no time in commencing the service.

Deep in our hearts we thanked God that all plots and barriers set up against us had eventually worked together for our good. Sending their warning letters over a wide area the priests themselves had advertised our meetings, and by their impeachments had merely aroused a lively interest and curiosity regarding us. Ousting us from the school-house simply resulted in augmenting our audience for the crowd had so increased in numbers that the High school would not have accommodated a quarter of them. It was twilight when we finally brought the meeting to a close, and parting with the believers and the congregation in general, prepared to depart for the Mennonite colony of Herzenberg.

"Stay with us longer. Why are you leaving so soon? Spend a few more days with us!" was heard from every side as we started off.

Devoutly crossing themselves and shrugging their shoulders in perplexity the priests with their retinue hid behind the church gates as we were passing by.



XLIX

ORDER AND CONDITIONS OF OUR WORK IN THE TENT

IN the beginning of August, after a few days' rest from incessant work, we decided to take our tent and work in that during the autumn season. Our members were increased at this time by the addition of four new members to our group. This was an advantage as we could now work with greater success. The Lord's help was wonderfully evident in everything as we sought to carry the Gospel message to places where it had never been proclaimed before. On arriving in a new village our first responsibility was to secure permission from the local authorities to pitch our tent on a place previously chosen.

When we had secured the same we would set up the tent in the most frequented and busy spot and proceed to work in that town from five to seven days, after which we would depart for the next village.

Early every morning the workers and any of the villagers who wished to be present would gather for Scripture reading and united prayer. After prayer and breakfast our day's work commenced. Two of the Sister workers (well versed in the science of medicine) would attend to those who were ill. Sometimes forty to forty-five villagers would daily come to the tent for treat-

ment. Others more seriously ill, who could not come to the tent, the Sisters would visit in their homes. While dispensing medical aid the Sisters improved every opportunity to minister to souls as well, telling them of the Great Physician, the loving Saviour and Divine Healer—for “with his stripes we are healed.”

All this service and medical supplies were given absolutely free of cost, unless someone desired to bring an offering in the form of provisions for our use or other daily necessities.

At the same time other Sister workers would assemble the village children for a meeting and teach them to sing the sweet Gospel hymns.

The Brethren would conduct religious conversations with the villagers who thronged to the tent, and distribute literature. They also visited the aged in their homes. Toward evening, when the villagers had finished their day's work and were free to attend the meeting, we held our regular services which often continued to a very late hour.

Our tent, large enough to accommodate some two hundred and fifty people, was always too small for the gatherings and we were obliged to roll up its canvas sides so that the people standing outside could also see and listen to the preaching of the Gospel.

We did not possess a team of our own, yet we never experienced any difficulty in the transportation of our effects from one village to another. At the end of our farewell meeting we would announce our intended departure to such and such a village on the following day, and the people themselves voluntarily offered more teams for our

disposal than we could possibly use to convey us thither.

Notwithstanding the fact that the activities of our Mission were permitted by the government we often experienced difficulty in securing permission from the local authorities, but in some instances they even helped us to overcome various handicaps.

At that time however we encountered the greatest hostility and opposition from another source. The Orthodox Catholic clergy (although shorn of their former power for active persecution) strove indirectly to harass us and hinder our work as much as possible. They broadcasted the most libelous insinuations and sent messages, before our arrival, warning people to avoid the tent meetings and to hold no communication with the travellers, who were in reality genuine antichrists going through Russia.

All the cunning plots and evil inventions of the opposers of the truth were most ineffectual, and did not check the mighty saving power of God's grace as His Word was faithfully proclaimed. The Holy Spirit, with infinite power, brought conviction to many hearts, and there were new converts in places where the Gospel had never before been preached. New churches were organized where the believers, built up in the Word, regularly conducted their own services.

L

ONCE MORE THE LITTLE FLOCK IS SAVED FROM THE WOLVES

CONTINUING our work we purposed to visit the large village of Bachmetevo not far from the city of Slaviansk. The priest, aware of our intended visit, sought before our arrival to incite the villagers against us, some of whom (evidently sent by him) came to our tent when we were in the neighboring village. They warned us not to come to their town saying all they could to persuade us to change our plans. "Violence, blows and all sorts of disagreeableness await you there! A whole array of strong clubs is ready for your reception!" Such were the words of one of these men sent to intimidate us.

Consulting with the workers whether or not it would be wise to visit a place whence had come such strong rejection coupled with threats, I finally said: "If we have received with joy and thankfulness all these great blessings from the hand of God, should we hesitate if it is His will that we suffer blows also for His name?" This settled the question and after asking for God's help on this venture we took down the tent (which was pitched in the village of Andrejevka) and departed for Bachmetevo.

That day proved to be a great church "Holy day." From the surrounding vicinity, in true Russian fashion, large crowds had assembled. The priest had provided entertainment in the form of a dinner for all, and the church grounds were crowded with long tables at which thousands of the village folk feasted.

Desiring to testify for Christ to this immense throng, we obtained permission from the local authorities to pitch our tent on the most frequented and foremost site. We had not quite ended putting in the stakes and strengthening it when an immense crowd surrounded us from every angle. We decided therefore to leave our work and commence the meeting without delay. After a few preliminary hymns were sung and I had in a short opening address explained the reason of our visit and the work of the Tent Mission, I opened my Bible to read the texts of my sermon. Suddenly we saw the most unexpected proceeding; the crowd (as if a bomb shell had burst in their midst) rushed out of the tent and hurried away.

I stood, open Bible in my hand, and we looked at one another in silent apprehension for it seemed as if there was some secret agreement in the action of the crowd which boded ill. We noticed that most of them hurried to the home of the priest although some had sought their own homes. There was no one around except a crowd of boys who amused themselves from time to time by hurling stones and sticks at the tent.

Finishing our work at the tent we prayed for God's help and guidance, then settled down

to await developments. Some three hours passed, then slowly one by one the people began to reassemble until the tent was so crowded that we were obliged to put up its sides.

After that we again commenced our meeting. It was a fair beginning for the people were quiet and attentive, although some perplexity was evident as they listened to the first sermon and to the singing of a number of spiritual songs. This however was only the lull before the storm. During the second address we noticed the arrival of a formidable retinue of the church powers and deacons, choir leader, teacher, elders of the church, etc, etc. In they crowded, together with a motley drunken mob. Loud and rude noises accompanied a volley of various questions addressed to us in order to interrupt the sermon. They sauntered through the congregation seeking to arouse the people against us.

The noise increased with every passing minute. From every angle new crowds swarmed in. It was well toward evening and we stopped the meeting as excitement was stirring the multitude and it was impossible to either speak or sing as our voices were drowned in the increased uproar of the mob. We now saw clearly that this reception had been long since planned and was now perfected by the priest and his company. Naturally we wondered what would be the outcome of this demonstration. Our arrangements for the night were ordinarily such that the brethren of our party slept in the tent, while Mrs. Astakhoff (my wife) and I—together with the Sister workers would seek sleeping accommodations among the friendly villagers. This plan

was also evidently known for when we concluded our meeting, a woman from the crowd drew near and invited us to her house for the night. She seemed so friendly we consented to come. Then she added: "I understand that some of your party sleep in the tent, but that will hardly be comfortable for them as it is fall and the nights are so chilly that your workers are liable to suffer greatly. I have a big house and a number of rooms which are all ready for you, therefore I want your entire party to come and lodge with me tonight." The eagerness with which she tendered her proposition, and her great desire to serve us, seemed a trifle queer and overdrawn, especially in view of the hostile front of the villagers who continued their wild uproar yet did not disturb my conversation with the woman.

"One word please," spoke a voice in an undertone close beside me. I looked around and a middle aged man, with a particularly anxious and warning look in his eyes was beckoning me aside. I followed him. "For God's sake," he began, "do not accept the invitation of that woman. I warn you to keep away from her house. If you go, then tomorrow neither you nor your tent will be in existence. That woman's house is a cover for bandits. There is a conspiracy against you here; they wish to entice you all there and secretly massacre you, also burn down the tent. These are wild war times, so who will bring them to answer for the consequences. I warn you be careful!"

With great gratitude to God for this visible defense I turned and declined the offered lodgings. Aid came however from other quarters

and our workers found shelter in a nearby humble home the owner of which had been touched by the divine message.

Darkness was falling as the uproar gained in strength. Things looked serious and our group was scattered every member being surrounded by a hostile crowd. "Strike them! Tear down the tent! Get some kerosene and set fire to it; let's warm ourselves near the tent!" was heard from every side. Clubs and sticks were brandished and flourished in the air. It seemed that any moment the crowd would break into violence and tear us limb from limb; yet it was God's will to send aid from an unexpected quarter. The local authorities directed some of the armed Militia to disperse the crowd. Brandishing their weapons the soldiers commanded the mob to scatter, which had the desired effect. It melted away so that there remained only about fifty men who tarried for a long time in deep and earnest conversation with our brethren.

It was a pitch dark autumn night, and it must have been nearly midnight when we were finally left alone, yet not for long. Soon after the departure of the last party there came a young man who earnestly entreated us to hasten to take down the tent and depart to our lodgings as a plot was on foot to burn down the tent or tear it to pieces.

Considering the force of this message we did not sleep that night but kept watch. God saved us however, as their plot was not carried out because a marauding band passed through the village that night and the inhabitants therefore, were afraid to leave their homes.

Morning came at last. Our Sister workers started to prepare breakfast but were met by an unexpected hindrance as no one would allow them to draw any water with which to make the coffee, neither would they give them a handful of firewood nor allow them to use their stoves (not even the ones outside the houses.)

After kneeling in prayer for these hardened villagers, we patiently settled down to await further developments, trusting that God would eventually commence His work as up to this time the Gospel had never been preached in this village.

Time passed but still no one came near the tent, not even the ailing folk although we had announced our free medical service.

A crowd of boys, standing afar off, continued to pelt the tent with missiles, stones and sticks. Getting bolder some came forward and commenced various annoyances as slackening the ropes of the tent and spitting against the windows. When we pleaded with them to stop and threatened we would tell their parents of their behaviour, they said, "Our parents sent us here themselves to disturb you!" They had absolutely nothing to fear from that quarter. It became necessary to arbitrate, so inviting the leader of the youthful gang into the tent, we commenced a friendly conversation and gave him a few interesting pamphlets to read. We then appealed to him to defend us from the other annoying lads. This brought amazing results for the annoyances instantly ceased and our new defender, proud of the responsibility, surely kept admirable order so that we were left in peace and quietness.

In the evening at the time we usually held our meetings all the personnel of the church service, and their families came and posted themselves at the entrance of the tent. Their purpose was to stop the villagers from attending our service, and their effort was crowned with success as the tent was empty that evening. Naturally this had a depressing effect upon the workers, who on the following morning during our united prayer proposed that we should give up trying to preach the Gospel here and move on to another place.

“Our stay here is in vain for we cannot visit the villagers in their homes as they will not receive us. Meetings in the tent they will not attend, consequently it is better not to waste time here but go to places where our work will bring forth fruit for the Master.”

After further deliberation it was decided to take down the tent and depart; but again the unexpected happened. Just a few minutes after our decision to depart there arose a high wind which blew with the velocity of a gale. It was now impossible to take down the tent as at the least slackening of the cords the gale could tear it out of our hold. Some of the workers then proposed to attempt to take it down in spite of the wind, but here was added one more handicap as we could not secure a team for the transportation of our effects. We were therefore obliged to remain.

It was apparent, and we felt that God's hand was holding us here for some purpose: that after all we were not to suffer defeat and would not

have to retreat from the field of battle. Here were surely souls for whom Christ died who might be saved by hearing the Gospel message, and through whom God's Word might continue to be preached.



LI

THE HYPOCRISY OF THE ENEMY REVEALED THE LORD IS GLORIFIED

ON the following evening and the three or more successive ones, in spite of all the efforts of the clergy to hold them back the villagers began to come to our meetings more and more. God's power was manifested and the villagers listened to His Word with profound interest and attention. Even the efforts of the priest (who appeared on the scene in person) were powerless to keep back the eager listeners who did not now pay any attention to his warnings and violent denunciations.

The last evening of our stay in that place we held a farewell meeting, and naturally felt happy and thankful that our sojourn had not resulted in failure. We had sown the precious seed and had even reaped some returns for after hearing the message some had already received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

But this was not all. God had wonderfully planned to reveal the hypocritical character of His enemies before the congregation, which resulted in a glorious triumph for the Gospel.

The priest (who remained in the street), his four daughters (who were all school-teachers), and the other church dignitaries, all came to the

meeting with the intention of breaking it up, but God planned otherwise.

A crowd assembled, but up to this time we had never mentioned in our service any opposing factions of the truth. Yet this evening (with no knowledge of one another's intention) both workers in their addresses revealed the true character of the clergy (in spite of their personal presence in the meeting) in all its underhanded falsity. At the beginning of the service they had interrupted with loud questions and noisy exclamations. The deacons and some others were especially active along this line, but it merely resulted in their being utterly defeated and discomfited before the congregation by the invincible power of truth.

With faces livid from fury they were now obliged to see their true and actual physiognomy.

When we had concluded the last sermon and the last hymn had been sung, the priest's helpers suddenly raised a frightful hubbub, saying, "My Orthodox Catholic Christians how grieved and outraged we have all been here tonight! How insulted and outraged is our Holy church! Our sanctuary has been grossly abused. We told you before that these are the antichrists! Come, let us drive them hence!"

The crowd was tired and tense excitement was evident, which might have developed into something formidable had it not been unexpectedly quelled by the following interesting incident.

Mrs. Astakhoff had been earnestly conversing with one of the priest's daughters,

and as their religious talk became somewhat animated the throng crowded near to listen, (especially the village women). To the question "Do you believe in life beyond the grave?" the priest's daughter, raising her voice in angered excitement, answered: "Do you intelligent and enlightened people of this age yet believe in such idle tales as that? I am certainly amazed!" "Strange," continued Mrs. Astakhoff, "that you do not believe in a life hereafter, when in your churches people are called upon to believe it. Your father conducts regular services in memory of the departed; prayers and mass are carried on for the welfare of the dead. Why do you do it if you do not believe in it?"

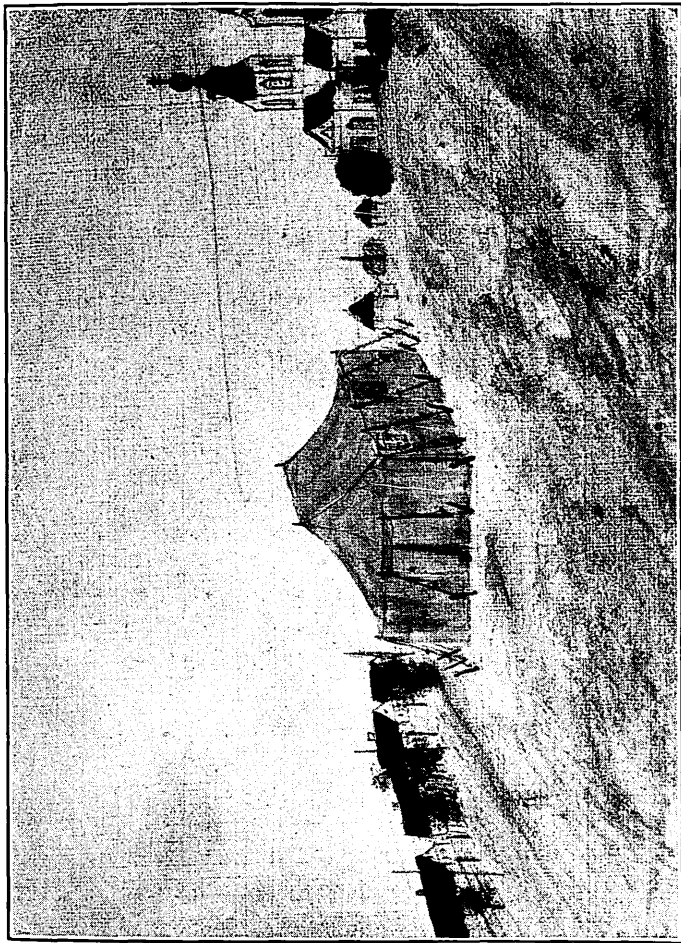
"Ha, ha, ha," suddenly broke in derisive laughter as the young lady exclaimed: "How did you feel when no one in the village would give you either bread or water? You starved, didn't you and wanted to eat, eh? So it is with us and our fathers; for our livelihood we do it! It's a business so we willingly carry out these set formalities."

Unconsciously she had gone too far; from the crowd were heard the following exclamations: "So that is it, you are cheating and deceiving us; not believing yourselves you tell us to believe, merely to live on us! Now we see clearly why you tried to poison our minds against these people! It is not they but you yourselves who are the antichrists! It is not they who should be driven hence—but you! At last we get the actual truth! Are you not ashamed to turn religion into a business to keep yourselves well fed and honored by all?"

Silent, with downcast faces, the priest's entire retinue hastily filed out of the tent.

Asking God's blessing upon the congregation; counseling them to live in the light of His Word and to study it always, with peace and gladness we departed from this village.





One of our tents during our Evangelistic campaign in Bachmetevo, in September, 1921, after the Lord in a marvelous way saved the workers as well as the tent from the hand of the destroyer. Not being able to carry a camera with us, Mrs. Astakhoff drew the picture coloring it with grass, berries and flowers.

LII

THE WORD OF GOD DOES NOT RETURN VOID

IT was late in the fall and the cold frosts constantly increased so that it became impossible to sleep in the tent. Cold rains and high winds were more and more a vital hindrance to our work, consequently after visiting a few more villages we drew our season's work to a close and laid the tent away for the winter.

During our campaign in two of the villages we were compelled to notice a new feature which gave us some uneasiness. The people would listen attentively to the sermons, manifest no hostility whatever to us or the Word, yet they were practically unmoved and there were no conversions. With great sadness of heart we left the places, but not without seeking in our inmost hearts for the reason for our not being able to see any visible results. We wondered if the fault was in us or in the audience.

We held a series of meetings in the village of Andrejevka and when we left many of the villagers (both young people and adults) knew many spiritual hymns and songs, which they even sang in farewell as we departed, yet not one soul had been converted.

Some five months passed and spring was approaching. I had just risen from a lengthy and

serious illness and was trying out my feeble steps for the first time when a stranger appeared in in the doorway. "What can I do for you my friend?" I inquired of the newcomer, motioning him to a chair by the window.

"I suppose you do not remember me," he began, "but I will tell you the reason for my visit. I remember you well because you were at our village of Andrejevka last fall where you held meetings in a large tent. I attended your services many times."

Settling down I looked at the visitor, but of course I did not remember him although I did recall the fact that not one soul had been converted there, and was naturally intersted as to what could have been the reason for this unexpected visit.

"Finding out that you resided not far from us I have come to you with an urgent request. We need Bibles very much. I have been trying to get one but with no success. When you left our town there arose a great argument among us as to who was preaching the truth. The villagers were divided into large factions, one maintaining that you had spoken and preached the truth, while the other party (to which I belonged) alleged and sought to prove that you were liars and false prophets and all that you said was wrong. To demonstrate the truth of our argument we commenced to assemble in the evenings and read the Bible which one of the villagers possessed, thus we studied, read and expounded. We often spent the entire night in arguing, trying to prove our points.

"One night they met at my home, and after they had gone I was left alone with my wife to whom I turned and said, 'All that those missionaries said was true for it is found in the Bible! Now what is to be done? If what those people and the Bible say is true, then we are lost for we are the worst of sinners!' My wife sat with her head buried in her hands for she was weeping.

" 'Yes, I have felt that myself for a long time,' she finally admitted. 'What shall we do? You remember those people said that we should repent and pray. Nobody is with us now so why not pray as we heard them pray in the tent?' Then and there we knelt (with tears of repentance) and asked God to forgive our sins for Jesus' sake. We were in prayer for about an hour, and when we arose from our knees felt as happy and joyous as little children. We did not go to sleep at all that night but sat up and read the Bible, sang hymns and prayed. In the morning we went to our neighbors and talked with them. Now we have a group of some twenty persons, and hold meetings every Sunday, conducting them as you did in your tent. As soon as it gets warm enough we all want to be baptised; but our greatest need is Bibles. There is only one in the village. But as the owner is an unconverted man and the priest has instructed him not to lend it to us anymore, not even that one is available, so for some time now we have been without the Word of God."

Having listened to the simple, but touching recital from this honest and goodly peasant we knelt together with our new brother in

Christ and poured out our profound thanks to God for these tidings that His Word had taken root, and although invisible to us, had brought forth fruit after such a long time.

After furnishing him with a few copies of the Bible, our Christian friend (light-hearted and happy) returned to his native village to praise God and continue to spread God's message of salvation among his fellow-men.



XLIII

"CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM" THE GOD OF ELIJAH IS OUR GOD

DURING the whole course of our evangelistic work, while experiencing mighty spiritual blessings, we were conscious that our loving Heavenly Father was wonderfully caring for our material and physical needs as well. We were more and more convinced that the more we absolutely sacrificed ourselves for His work and cause, the more fully and tenderly He cared for us, protected us and satisfied our smallest needs.

The years 1921 and 1922 were two of the very hardest to endure because the famine had reached its most intense stages; but our group of five to nine workers (although lacking all financial means for providing necessary provisions) experienced no acute need.

True, supplies were meagre and poor, but still we never actually starved. The Lord sent us food and necessities, often through the medium of perfect strangers and unconverted ones as well.

There was one episode when the question was raised among our workers regarding the buying of some bread. It was toward the end of our summer's work 1921, when our tent was pitched

in the village of Kurkulak. Our Sisters had gone to prepare breakfast, when they announced that there was not even a crust of bread among our supplies. "We will go and buy some," said I, but one of our workers maintained that it would indicate lack of faith on our part and that it would be better to starve than not to wait for God to work. We all agreed therefore to wait until God would provide us with food without our buying it.

We commenced our morning worship of reading the Scripture and prayer, during which time the fellow worker who had maintained that to buy bread would indicate lack of faith in God, again raised the question as to whether the Saviour during His earthly ministry had ever bought bread as he journeyed with His disciples through the eastern villages.

This was answered in the affirmative by reading parts of the Gospel where Christ sent His disciples to buy bread.

"Oh, then I will myself hurry now and buy food for us," cried the lately protesting member. "If Christ bought bread then we can do so also." When our morning prayers were over he hurried to the village to buy food for us; but he was freely given a goodly supply of provisions (far more than our group needed for one meal) those who donated it refusing all monetary remuneration.

Our summer's work was ended and the tent laid aside until the following spring. We disbanded and the workers departed to their homes. Mrs. Astakhoff and I (together with one of our

Sister workers) chose to winter in the town of Barvenkovo which was not far from the places in which we had worked during the summer months.

It was our intention to visit and strengthen the new converts in Gospel truths during the winter time; but it was God's will to lead us by a different path than that which we anticipated. During the month of November, after renting a small house, I was obliged to depart to Kharkow on business for the Mission to secure permission from the authorities to order a seal for our Mission. This was successfully accomplished; but I had the misfortune to contract typhus fever on the way and returned home seriously ill. This illness laid me up for two months, as it was a very heavy attack and my third battle against the disease. My system, (weakened by the two previous attacks and completely robbed of energy by months of strenuous work) lacked physical power to resist the onslaughts of the fatal march of the disease. The crisis lasted for a whole week. My wife (though herself wearied and exhausted with missionary work) was an untiring nurse (also a professional one) and passed whole nights and days unceasingly at my bedside. In fact for about twenty-one days and nights she did not leave me (not even for an hour).

During these harrowing days the continual prayers of the believers rose to God for my recovery. On the eighth day of the crisis (the whole period passed in complete unconsciousness) I gradually became conscious and recognized my wife and the friends who surrounded

my bed. Their prayers were answered and from that moment I was on the slow road to recovery. Toward spring God had sufficiently strengthened me so that I was again able to take up my work for Him.

The lengthy period of my illness was a veritable ordeal of faith for my wife and our Sister S. E., for during that winter the most acute and bitter famine raged in the southern parts of Russia. Even during our fall work, when we still travelled with our tent, many had remarked to us in derision: "We will watch how you will preach during this coming winter! What God will then give you food when we ourselves (even though putting in supplies and provisions is our only business) have none for the winter's sustenance? Perhaps you will manage to live only on faith without food of any kind."

The human view-point revealed nothing else but a speedy death from starvation; but our God—whom we trusted—was ever with us and we had no fears for the future. Although we did not have the necessary supply of provisions, fuel, warm clothing, foot-wear and financially could not provide same; yet we fully trusted Him who said, "And in the time of famine I will feed you." We had even rented our cottage with the understanding that we would pay for its use with certain provisions; and last, but by no means least, I was laid up with my serious illness soon after.

The famine raged in the vicinity and the victims fell dead in the streets; but all this time the God of Elijah was our God as well, showing us His power and those ways by which He fed

His prophet in the home of the widow of Zarephath in the time of the dread famine in Israel.

From day to day He graciously provided every need for my wife and her friend as well as for their patient. We did not possess the means for engaging the services of a physician; but by His grace I had three of the best doctors in the vicinity, one (who residing some fifty verst from Barvenkowo) sent me necessary remedies which could not be procured here by any means.

We did not have any money to buy milk, yet during that two months of illness we daily received the necessary amount; although at that time it was extremely difficult to get milk, even for money, because the people had utilized all their cattle for meat. And not only cattle, for their hunger was so great that dogs, cats and even rats were eaten.

One morning, with considerable perplexity, my wife turned to Sister S. E. with the words: "We have no food whatever in the house to prepare for our patient! Let us pray that God will provide the necessary supply for He hath said: 'Ask and it shall be given you;' many times He has provided for us, and surely He—the Merciful, will not forsake us this time." To the throne of God rose their united prayer for their daily provide the necessary supply for He hath said: bread; and in this instance again was verified His promise, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," for they had just risen to their feet when a slight noise was heard at the door, and a stranger entered carrying a bundle in his hand. "Excuse me for making such an unexpected call," the

peasant said apologetically: "I do not suppose you know me, but I remember you very well; last fall you held tent meetings in our village. This morning, (as I was coming to Barvenkovo to the public market here) my wife desired to send by me this little present of food for you." With this he laid his parcel on the table. It contained a pitcher of milk, about a dozen eggs and one large loaf of white wheat bread.

This certainly exceeded all their expectations for it was wonderful to have such an abundant supply all at once in time of famine; eggs, milk and bread—and at the exact time of special need. With tears of gratitude in their eyes, they who had just prayed for aid, thanked their Heavenly Father for the answer to their petition as they looked at everything in amazement. It was indeed a speedy and wonderful answer to prayer.

"And where is your husband?" further inquired the kindly peasant. "I would like to see him, and still more to speak with him for only lately we heard that you were stopping in Barvenkovo for the winter."

"He has been very ill for quite a few weeks, but you may see him if you will just step in here," returned my wife, leading the way and opening the door of my chamber.

The visitor stopped short when he saw my changed condition and emaciated face on the pillow. "Oh, may God Himself raise you up that you may be able to come again and speak to us of Christ and salvation," he ejaculated—as if in prayer—while tears of pity glistened in his honest eyes. "Have you anything suitable to give to a sick person?" he turned to Mrs. Astak-

hoff. "He cannot eat ordinary fare!" was his solicitous declaration.

"Ah, yes," she returned (as she smiled through her tears) "we prayed to God and He has provided the need—you see He sent you to bring us this abundant supply. We do thank God and you for your kind thought of us. Please give your good wife our sincerest thanks; and may God Himself bless and reward you for all this."

"Ah, well, well!" suddenly ejaculated the peasant (while his eyes were again wet) "now I see and believe more and more that God really takes care of those who are loyal and faithful to Him! When I was getting ready to come to Barvenkovo, and my wife begged me to bring this parcel to you, I confess I was a trifle disinclined to comply, not knowing just where you lived. Then again I thought I would not have any time to hunt you up. Besides I felt that perhaps such a visit would seem queer as I had only met you once in my whole life. But my wife insisted that I should take it, saying that for a long time she had wanted to send you something and this morning the desire was very strong upon her. The Lord must have spoken to her heart. Well," he concluded, "thank God that it was brought in time!"

Thus the Lord, day by day, provided for our needs. In the beginning of my illness we received a visit from Brother J. W., who had owned a flour mill. It had been taken from him, but he had some stores on hand. He often gave flour to his starving friends, and he surprised us one day by bringing forty pounds of

fine white flour, which was a great and unexpected help.

Our cottage contained but two small rooms, we did not have any storeroom, nor anything that could be utilized for one, so Mrs. Astakhoff stored the precious flour under a bench which stood in one of the rooms. During all the time of my illness they had used of the flour. Almost three months had passed and I was steadily improving for I could now walk alone across the room.

One day when Sister S. E. was away, as I walked around the room (in a ruminative turn of mind) I inquired of my wife how they had both fared during my illness, and if God had protected and provided for them?

"We did not starve ourselves, but God gave us the opportunity of feeding even others. We had very little bread, but every day we cooked a little kettle of millet meal to give to the starving folk who came to our cottage. God sent us millet meal and we have some yet. I wonder, though, how the flour is holding out I have really forgotten to pay attention to that supply—whether or not we have much left. It is a long time since Brother J. W. gave it to us so I will go and see." She drew out the bag and placed it in the middle of the room. "What is this?" she suddenly exclaimed in great wonderment. "See there is more than half left. We have used it every day for months so what can it mean! It is a veritable miracle!" She showed me the dish which had served as a measure, and which had been filled nearly every day. It

did not take much calculation to prove that in the ordinary course of events what they had already used would be about twice the amount which was originally in the sack; yet there was a good half still there.

Looking on the flour before us, we both knelt and thanked our Heavenly Father (our hearts filled with gratitude and praise) for we now saw clearly that the God of Elijah was our God as well. The Lord liveth; and the invincible hand who constantly refilled the flour barrel for the widow in Zarephath some two thousand eight hundred years ago, had done the same for us here in this humble cottage of Barvenkowo, where dwelt His servants.

"And to keep them alive in famine." Psalm 33:19. This promise swept through my mind, and how in a visible form it had been fulfilled for us.

In retrospection we could truly say that God alone had fed us through this winter's famine, and in the natural, ordinary way He had sent help through the medium of friends and well wishers.

Regarding our flour, however, He chose the direct supernatural way to replace it for His greater glory and our deeper trust.

Up to this instance when reading the story of Elijah and the widow's barrel of meal, I did believe it, but it was somewhat difficult for the human mind to grasp how it was done as such a proceeding seemed to be against all the natural and fixed laws. But God revealed to us that He who created all stands higher than any rules and laws and changeth such at His pleasure.

Reflecting on these things it was certainly strange that cleaning the house every day, (often pushing the sack aside to wash the dust away, and most of all taking out the supply for their food) my wife had never noticed how much of the flour was left.

In the midst of our wonderment over this miraculous happening, (when the sack of flour still stood in the center of the room) the door opened and Miss S. E. entered the room. Re-counting to her the cause of our amazement, she was still more astonished. Then we once more (the three of us) sank to our knees and thanked God for all His wonderful acts among the children of men.



XLIV

VISITING THE CITIES HELP OF HIM WHO SENT US

IT was spring, the year 1922. To work in the tent during this season (or even without it to travel and preach the Gospel from village to village in a group) was altogether impossible for acute famine raged in the land. The winter had cleared away the last vestiges of food supplies, and this condition tended to obliterate every prospect of spiritual work. The needs of the soul were now completely swallowed up in the poignant need of the body. One fearful slogan was the cry among the hopeless population: "Bread! bread! give us bread!"

As there was no possibility of working in a group, the two of us (my wife and I) turned our attention to the cities, having for a long time intended to visit them for evangelistic work. We visited Moscow, Petrograd, Witjebesk, Smolensk, Orel, Kharkow and many villages. In every city we spent some ten to twenty days, conducting services every day, which were always attended by immense throngs. The Lord supplied every need; while the believers rejoiced and were strengthened in His Word. Many sinners found happiness and forgiveness at the foot of the Cross, and made their peace with God during that time.

The land was in a terrible condition, and during our travels we had numerous occasions to witness it. The stations were crowded with ragged throngs of people, (terrible to behold in their destitute, starving condition) and sometimes when glancing into the freight cars on the side tracks we would see a dreadful sight; they were crowded with the corpses of those who had died of starvation. Such terrible scenes of death on every side would often bring the thought: "And what if unable to travel further, and lacking all means of sustenance, we too may also perish at one of these stations, together with scores of others?" But these words of truest import: "I will keep them alive in famine," would come to mind at such moments and quiet all apprehension.

Thus, implicitly trusting in God (without any human aid) we were enabled to make this great journey. From the beginning to the end we did not experience the least difficulty or hindrance regarding financial matters. "They that trust in the Lord shall not be ashamed," says His Word.

There was only one instance when we turned to man for help, but it resulted in disappointment and discomfiture, which we accepted as our just due for the momentary lack of faith which had prompted us to seek human aid. It was during our work in Moscow (that having had especially poor and meagre food) some of the believers advised us to appeal for help to the American Relief Committee, who distributed food parcels to the Christians.

Having received the address I departed to the office of Mr. Porter, the Administrator of the American Aid. Back from the street in the shady loveliness of a small park there stood an ancient and pretty wooden building where we found Mr. Porter. After a brief statement acquainting the administrator with the object of my visit I received the following reply from Mr. Porter and the Russian representative: "We do not render any aid to persons who are occupied with spreading religious propaganda." A reply which sent us (together with the friends who had advised the venture) to our knees to implore God's pardon for this wrong step.

Aid was refused by those who had an abundance, but our prayers were answered and help came from her who had nought. An humble widow, receiving a direct intimation from God to aid His servants, helped us during our entire stay in the city, while God also supplied her need.

This incident taught us still more to rely implicitly on God's aid and mercy, and gave us less and less confidence in help from man.

During our work in Moscow God abundantly blessed our frail efforts. For a fortnight we held blessed meetings in a large hall and they were well attended by immense throngs. In those days it seemed as if the whole city was in the grip of a great religious stir and search after truth; the Orthodox church had divided into different groups and they held various religious disputes and discourses. Lectures and disputes were conducted by Loonatcharsky and others. The population was pent up with one eager thirsting search for truth. They listened every-

where and our visit to Moscow happened at that time.

After the commencement of our meetings the number of listeners steadily increased. Two adjoining halls, which had previously been used for dancing, were now too small to accommodate the audience. In spite of the drenching rains, which for a few days poured down upon the city, the inhabitants (though wet) came to every service to hear the message of Christ. The believers, (members of the Christian church in Moscow) were strengthened and encouraged and fired with a greater and more loyal desire to serve their divine Master, while the unbelievers, in deep repentance, prayed for the forgiveness of their sins.

One evening after an address entitled, "Antichrist and his time," there came up to the pulpit a middle aged woman with a particularly intelligent face. "All that you have said about God and the antichrist I am convinced is right and true," she began, looking up at me. "Every day since you came I have attended your lectures and have come to that conclusion; yet how can I accept this truth and take Christ as my personal Saviour?"

"If you believe that Christ is the Son of God; the Saviour of sinners and will own that you are a sinner, then the point is clear and there is nothing else for you to do but to kneel and call upon Him to forgive your sins. There is no other way. In Scripture it is said: 'For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Rom. 10:13.'" I answered.

"Ah, I know that, but I cannot call on the

name of the Lord," returned the woman in a strangely tragic and hopeless tone. "I cannot pray! I am lost, unquestionably lost! Hear my story and then you will be convinced that what I say is true. Perhaps then you will understand and can find some way to help me. Even in my early youth when I was still a student, I possessed the most exalted ideal of life, which was altruistic to its core; I wanted to fight against everything that was low, sinful and evil. I wished to help the weak and unfortunate and sought to find a right pathway of life. I first sought the answer to my questions in science, but found none, then I went into Socialism, thought then I had the right idea and tried to persuade others to grasp the plan and accept the system; but alas we were all floundering. I have acquainted myself with many political parties both in and outside of Russia, and have been disappointed in every one seeing much evil and falsity. At last I joined 'The Worshipers of Satan' of which I am now a member. You are amazed and almost doubt my words," she commented noting the horrified surprise on my face. "But that is true, hear me further: as you believe and worship God so we believe and worship the Devil; as you pray to God so we pray to Satan, and as God answers your prayers, so Satan answers ours. When you gather for your meetings Christ's presence is in your midst; when we gather for ours Satan is there! We can almost feel his tangible presence, and he is here now. He won't let me pray to Christ for pardon even now when I see the truth. All is clear before me and I know that without Christ I am lost forever,

but I cannot accept the truth of His saving grace, cannot accept Him and pray to Him to help me. Is there any escape for me? Our society was but lately organized, but its members are the elect. We are bound by fearful oaths and vows! I am telling you this however in strictest confidence and I hope you will not betray me, because if I tell anyone or leave the society the penalty is death. The aim of this religion is to annihilate every religion, destroy all faith in God, first in Russia, then over all the world. We are now systematically destroying all Bibles and religious literature in the land.

“The right to print it is now prohibited in Russia; and all that comes from other countries we are destroying so that it may not reach you for distribution among the people. See, I have here in my possession a few copies of the religious pamphlets sent from other lands. These we intercepted and are now destroying;” with this she handed me a few tracts. “Oh, do not betray me, and, if possible, help me to escape from the snare which now fills me with horror,” moaned this unfortunate soul.

“Is it merely the phantasy of delirium, or can it be actual-horrible truth?” I kept asking myself. If it is true, then Russia is on the brink of perdition for this strange woman has given me to understand that the foremost and most influential powers of the land are members of this terrible organization.

Of the subsequent fate of this woman I know nothing, but from certain proceedings which are becoming more and more pronounced in Russia,

I am now convinced of the truth of her narrative.

Leaving Moscow we went to other cities proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since the beginning of 1917 I had spent month after month in continual evangelistic work, not even having a home. In the fall, when I returned from this journey, I was again completely exhausted and ill from intense exhaustion, consequently Mrs. Astakhoff was constrained to take me away for a rest.



LIQUIDATION OF THE TENT MISSION

DURING the last days of the work of the Tent Mission the path became more and more narrow. The door once so wide open was slowly closing on us. The number of workers steadily decreased. During these harrowing times of want and privation some of the brethren could not leave their families in destitution while they engaged in Mission work; added to this, my own health (as well as that of my wife) was completely wrecked.

For some time however, our hands were not lifted from the plow as the whole year of 1923 still passed in blessed evangelistic work. We invited a Christian friend (Brother F. K.) to be my helper, so we worked together in the Russian and German villages in the provinces of Kharkow, Ekaterinoslav, Poltava and others.

The remaining members of the Mission worked further south. The Lord continued to care for His humble servants providing them with all the necessities of life.

At the end of the year 1923 we were finally convinced that there was no longer any possibility that the Tent Mission could continue its existence. Proportionately as the present government gained control of the land the work of the Tent Mission was forced to the wall.

Already in 1921, in spite of the fact that the statutes of the Tent Mission (granting permission for unhindered activities) had been legally registered by the controlling powers, difficulties and hindrances were constantly set up by the authorities to hinder our work. These had increased to such an extent that to go from village to village, as formerly, was out of the question.

In the year 1922 the work of the Salvation Army in Moscow had been closed by the authorities. During the time of our stay in Moscow, the leader of the Salvation Army, (Captain Konstantinowa) had just finished a term of nine months imprisonment for preaching the Gospel. It could be clearly foreseen that the end of the Tent Mission was at hand.

During the summer of 1923 a law was passed providing the re-registration of all the religious organizations; and those who failed to obtain this new registration were to be non-existent. All our attempts to renew the registration of the Tent Mission resulted in failure. In Kharkow and Moscow we received a final, absolute and unconditional refusal.

We were then sent to the local authorities, but they could only register local churches of not less than forty members; therefore so-called "illegal religious work" was now impossible, as without receiving documents from the officials, permitting such activities, the ministers were invariably arrested.

After our failure to renew the registration of the Tent Mission, and after a number of members had already been arrested for working without the documents, it was decided to invite the re-

maining members for a general conference to decide what steps to pursue regarding further activities. This assembly was held at the end of the year 1923.

After most earnest reflections and due deliberation it was decided that to save the Mission as an organization was now impossible. Declaring the work of the Tent Mission officially closed, each individual still purposed to continue to proclaim the Gospel wherever it was God's will to lead him.

In this manner the work commenced by Jacob Dyck in 1917 (and which continued with great blessing after his death in 1919) at the end of 1923 was compelled to close.

During the seven years of it's activities we experienced many joys and blessings as well as tribulations, privations and tragedies. In the dread time of suffering and affliction in the land; the time of spiritual famine when many churches could not be visited by the ministers, and there was no possibility of procuring religious literature; when masses of ailing folk (lacking medical aid) bore privations and tribulations—often ending in death, the members of the Tent Mission at least poured a drop of help into the vast bucket of human suffering among the Russian people. Many hundreds and thousands of erring souls were also brought to Christ.

These pages cast but a faint reflection of the actual work, the rest will be fully revealed before the throne of the Most High.

Eleven members of the Mission had died, while others who survived continued their work with great blessing in other places.

Whether or not it will ever be possible to again renew the work of the Tent Mission, (sealed with the blood of it's martyrs) only the Lord knoweth. All that was possible to do for the glory of God and the salvation of lost souls, was done by the remaining members. May God forgive us if we failed anywhere. May the unceasing prayers of those who read this account rise from the depths of their hearts for the suffering people in Russia, and for all the servants of God, who together with Him, labored for the salvation of the people, counting not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many sealed their testimonies with their blood. May the Lord also help all His dear children to be "faithful unto the end."

The majority of the surviving members of the Tent Mission had to leave the country and find homes in other countries. But in the hearts of some there is a burning desire to go back and work for their Master in their home-land until He comes.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MISSION

DURING all the time of the existence of the work of the Tent Mission its work was conducted in the Spirit of Christ, and was undenominational as well as international. The workers were of different nationalities: Russians, Germans, Jews, Finns and Letts, who worked together in perfect unity, having one common interest: the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth, as well as the glorious hope of winning many precious souls for the glory of God.

These workers belonged to different denominations, viz., Mennonites, Evangelical Christians, Baptists and Lutherans. Although from different nationalities, divers denominations and various positions in life, they were bound together as a unit by Calvary with the single purpose of declaring the salvation of God to lost souls for whom Christ died. All differences therefore, were effaced by their Divine Master who held first place in every heart and in every thing.

Keeping before them the realization of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His sacrifice on Calvary, as well as the importance "of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," there was no time for controversy, but only for the all absorbing work of trying to win souls for their

Lord, Who had shed His precious blood for them. It is written: "He that winneth souls is wise."

Furthermore the hearts of all the workers were filled with the consciousness that the Second Coming of the Lord is at hand, and that the world has little need of ones personal views nor for the establishment of any beautiful forms of Christianity.

Under the present system of formalism and philosophy the world is perishing. The needy world is searching for simplicity, life and light.

We did not try to establish or organize churches but directed the converts to the nearest Christian church. The purpose of our work was not to baptize but to preach Christ Crucified; not to organize visible churches but to add the saved to the universal and invisible body of the Church of Christ.



STUNDISTS

TO the south of Russia over one hundred years ago there migrated some tens of thousands of German colonists, most of whom were Mennonites. The Christian colonists conducted meetings for the study of the Holy Scriptures, which in the German language were called "Bibel Stunde;" Bible Hour, or the hour devoted to Bible study and prayer.

When many neighboring Russian people, (under the blessed influence of these German believers) were also converted to Christ, they also commenced to hold meetings similar to their German brethren. Then the Greek Orthodox clergy began to nickname them as "Stundists" a perversion of the German "Bibel Stunde," and classified their faith in Christ as "German Faith." This designation was given in derision, and with the object of rousing popular feeling against them so as to hinder dissemination of the Gospel.

After the Russian believers increased in numbers, the churches were officially organized as Evangelical Christians, and Baptists. Even to-day they are often called, "Stundists."

WHY MISSIONARIES WERE OBLIGED TO RIDE ON THE ROOF OF THE TRAINS

FOR the benefit of persons unacquainted with the true state of affairs in Russia after the Communists came into power this brief account is written.

In order to conquer the whole country and establish their rigorous rule, the Communists from the very beginning declared that all property in the country belonged to the public, and everyone was to have equal rights in its use. Factories, mines, manufacturing plants, department stores, great farming districts, and the like, were speedily appropriated and taken from their rightful owners. Railways, and the whole system of transportation also came under their monopoly, therefore first and second class modes of travelling were eliminated and everyone had to travel in freight cars. Tickets and fares were abolished and travelling was free, but "Permission" had to be obtained from the authorities before one could board a train.

Considering this state of affairs it is no wonder that in a short time the whole system of railroad transportation was completely demoralized. Regularity of train service was a lost art; coaches and cars were wrecked; locomotives (lacking the necessary overhauling and repairing) refused to generate steam and could scarce-

ly move down the tracks. These wretched, scarcely-crawling trains were mostly used for the transportation of the Red Army and its supplies.

The mines (also half ruined) caved in and flooded, consequently the coal supply gave out. Lacking fuel trains were often compelled to stop for days waiting for a new supply of coal. Finally railroad buildings were demolished and converted into fuel to keep the trains going. The ties of side tracks were likewise torn up and used in place of coal.

During the famine the status quo beggared description! Passenger trains were abolished, but from time to time wretched freighters crawled from place to place. These were fairly besieged by the frantic, starving population whose one absorbing desire was to go to other places in search of food. In countless numbers they swarmed on the train, crawled up to the roofs of the cars, or clinging to the stanchions in one wild and desperate (often hopeless) attempt to escape the dread death from starvation. In winter countless numbers of these unfortunate passengers were frozen to death on the roofs of the trains. Unknown and unidentified they would roll off and be buried in the snow, or the agents of the Tcheka would take down the frozen corpses at the railway stations. In many instances (where a narrow tunnel like passage—barely wide enough—was cut through the deep snow for the train) the hapless passengers, clinging to the sides of the train, were invariably torn away and perished miserably, either under the wheels of the cars or they were slowly frozen to

death. Many parents, who took these desperate journeys in the hope of procuring food for their children, never returned. They perished by the way unknown and unidentified. The corpses of those who were frozen, or killed under the wheels of the train, were invariably buried without an attempt at identification for the simple reason (though appalling fact) that these cases were countless in number; that disorganization had taken the place of any systematized plan and that there was no one to look after these problems.

The result of this regime was that instead of possessing the wealth of the land in common, and having everything for free distribution, countless masses of the population met an untimely death and had an unknown burial.

Travelling at that time was therefore singularly difficult, and our missionaries, in order to reach their desired destination, were often obliged to travel on the roof of the cars, on the locomotive or anywhere they could find footing amongst the freight in box cars.



MACKNO AND HIS TROOPERS

MACKNO was a peasant from the province of Ekaterinoslav and the village of Guleipole. For certain crimes he was serving his term in prison. The Revolution breaking out set all the prison doors open and thus he obtained his freedom.

In the year 1918 the German Army invaded the Ukraine and ruthless pillage commenced. The invaders took by force grain, stock and valuables from the hapless and hopeless peasants and shipped the spoil by trainloads to Germany.

Mackno secretly organized a small band with the help of the peasants. As their crafty leader was thoroughly acquainted with the vicinity he easily discomfited the Germans, as unaware of his maneuvers they were taken by surprise as he harrassed them on every side.

Toward the end of the year 1918 the German Army evacuated the land. During their stay their country-men (the German Catholic, Lutheran and Mennonite colonists of Russia, the latter not having raised arms for centuries because of conscientious scruples) for self-protection had also organized their fighting squads. These fell under the merciless vengeance of Mackno and bitter fighting broke out. Mackno was on the offensive, while the colonists desperately attempted to defend their territories.

When the tide of Civil War reached its high-

est pitch in the beginning of 1919, the Red Army came from the north and Mackno united his forces with them. The Mennonites and other colonists were consequently forced to yield.

In the spring of 1919 Denikin's Army came on the scene. At that time Mackno was holding his position near the Azof sea, in the vicinity of the city of Mariapol. In May, (having fallen out at Moscow on account of refusing to acknowledge the Commanders in Chief of the Red Army) he wired the following answer to their commanders: "To the Spendthrifts of the Red Army (Commanders nominated by Moscow) Father Mackno will not subject himself;" whereupon he immediately took his army from the front of the Reds, and they were therefore obliged to leave post-haste the Crimea, and in a short time the Ukraine as well.

After the retreat of the "Reds," Mackno again organized his army (which often numbered a hundred thousand strong) and successfully harrassed the rear of Denikin's army. continually conducting a fierce and ruthless guerilla warfare. Many factories, public buildings and hundreds of the richest and most beautiful estates (together with the finest racing stables) were by Mackno and his troopers consigned to fire, sword and wholesale slaughter.

The Communistic element, still in the Ukraine, went to augment his ranks, and Denikin was soon obliged to evacuate the Ukraine.

When the Red Army again occupied the Ukraine, Mackno a second time failing to agree with the Commanders of the Red Army once more separated from them.

In the fall of 1920, the Reds unable to withstand the fierce fighting of Wrangel's Army, again turned to Mackno and he joined his forces with them against Wrangel. Thoroughly at home in the districts he led his cavalry through marshes and struck Wrangel in the rear of his army gaining such a complete victory that Wrangel was forced to leave the Crimea.

After this victory over Wrangel, Mackno again separated from the Reds; but he was soon obliged to flee from Russia to Poland. His soldiers went back to the Red Army.

The greater part of Mackno's Army were communistic and anarchistic. They spared nobody and nothing. They seemed to be imbued with satanic instincts for they delighted in bloodshed and carnage. No wonder that the most seasoned war veterans trembled before these fiends in human form!



MY PERSONAL IMPRESSION
REGARDING RUSSIA
WHO PREACHES THE GOSPEL

THE Russian people (possessing a singular and often—by other nations—little understood psychology) has also peculiarities in spreading the Gospel.

Every European nation, whether large or small, (America likewise) had, and still have their great Reformers and Evangelists, who were and are the great exponents of Bible truths in their lands: Wycliffe, Luther, Wesley, Huss, Zwingli, Calvin, Jerome-Prasheski, Spurgeon, Moody and many others.

Russia's history, both past and present, is altogether different. It is a land presenting no possibilities for the development and activity of great Gospel Teachers.

The conditions under which the Bible truth was spread during the late Monarchistic regime, as well as during the present rule, have rendered their appearance a total impossibility. The disseminators of the Gospel in Russia have been, and are still, neither the great nor the famous, but the simple, the unknown and the common folk. They belong to those whose names and photographs will never appear in newspaper, journal, nor on the pages of history. Some are peasants and working men who day after day

toil in factories, on docks or in the fields behind the plow; but in the evening they are found behind the pulpits intelligently (and endowed by the Holy Spirit,) expounding the Word of God to eager listeners; or they are found in the humble peasant homes, surrounded by neighbors and friends, unknown and unseen save by Him (our Father in heaven).

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, . . . in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

These simple followers of the Lord continue to spread the Gospel message from individual to individual, from house to house, from village to village and from city to city.

There are no great revivals nor phenomenal conversions of vast throngs, but slowly and surely the work goes on, and in this manner the Divine message of salvation is victoriously proclaimed through the length and breadth of the land of Russia by the peasant in the villages and by the workmen in the cities. The government, when attempting to stop the spread of the Gospel by arresting and exiling the foremost ministers, are simply in error and exposing their impotency because every Russian believer is a minister.

To effectively check the spread of the Gospel in Russia it would be necessary to exile the entire church of Christian believers.

The part played by a small percentage of the educated upper classes in spreading the Gospel in Russia has largely been to organize

churches. The reason for this is that but a small percentage of the educated upper classes in Russia are Christians; as they are either the most fanatical adherents of the Greek Catholic church or rank materialists who do not believe in God.



HOW MANY CHRISTIANS IN RUSSIA

WE read various reports in newspapers and magazines. It was recently stated that there are at present "as many as thirty-five millions of Christians in Russia," but it is absolutely impossible to give a correct estimate at the present time.

Before the World War the number of Christians belonging to the four main Protestant denominations, (Evangelical Christians, Baptists, Mennonites and Molokans) was about five-hundred thousand. When I left Russia in 1926 there were about three million members belonging to these four denominations. The two denominations (Evangelical Christians and Baptists) had increased. The Molokans had neither gained nor lost; while the Mennonites decreased because about twenty thousand left the country during these recent years.



HOW THE NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS INCREASED

OFTEN one hears the question: "How is it that the number of Christians has increased in a time when the Communistic element is so merciless and continues to persecute them?"

Before the war most of the Christian churches were located either in the large cities or on the out-skirts of the country, but during the war people were scattered. Many Christian young men were called for service and were dispersed all over the country where they preached the Gospel to the soldiers. Standing on the ground of God's Word, "Thou shalt not kill" they refused to take up arms; but through their loyalty to God and upright steadfastness won tens of thousands of the soldiers to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of the Russian soldiers, taken as war prisoners in Germany, heard the Gospel there and were converted. After the armies were demobilized, the soldiers from the front as well as the war prisoners from Germany, came to their homes. The Christians among them, (now scattered all over the country) preached the Gospel of salvation in the darkest places of Russia.

That was the time of Civil War. The different political parties were fighting to gain control of the country so they had no time to watch the spread of the Gospel, therefore it did increase

with great blessing, although sometimes it cost great sacrifices—as in the Tent Mission.

Already in 1919 the Soviet government declared to Brother Dyck (the founder and first president of the Tent Mission), “You should all be shot, and as soon as we have finished with our armed foes we will take hold of you.” This threat has materialized and is now practiced, for the Soviet government, having established its power, are persecuting the Christians in the most merciless manner.

During the time when communism was engaged in political warfare the Gospel took firm hold of vast throngs all over the country. At the present time many of God’s people die a martyr’s death; others who have not been fully consecrated fall away because they are not able to endure the terrible persecutions. Great iniquity on the one hand, and awful persecution on the other, are great hindrances to the spread of the Gospel.

IMPRESSIONS REGARDING PRESENT EVENTS

AS I am not a politician, but a student of the Holy Scriptures and a preacher of Gospel truths, I look on all these events in Russia through the prism of the Word of God, and see therein the hand of God and the fulfilment of prophecy.

The fall of the Russian monarchy and the tragic end of the reigning house was closely allied to their treatment of the Jewish nation. To the public in general this does not appear clear and is little understood; but God speaks of that nation in the following terms: "He that toucheth you" (Israel) "toucheth the apple of His eye." Zech. 2:8. Consequently the individual, or nation, who persecutes the Jewish nation persecutes God Himself, and wars against Him.

The Book of Esther records the plot of the Persian Prime Minister, ("Haman") to destroy the Jew "Mordecai," and together with him the whole Jewish nation. Before his house Haman caused an immense gallows to be erected on which he intended Mordecai should be executed. Heralds were sent throughout the land to announce the coming destruction of the Jews by order of the king; but most unexpected was the result of all Haman's preparations for he was the one to be hanged on the gallows which he had caused to be erected for Mordecai. The Jew-

ish nation was saved, and in turn fell on and destroyed their enemies.

This happened in ancient times, but it has been repeated in our days in Russia. The innocent blood of the Hebrews has been shed again and again. What would have happened at the end of the World War we cannot tell; perchance thousands of the Israelites would have paid with their lives for the defeats which the Russian Army suffered, for it was a known fact that in the hands of the Monarchy the unfortunate Jews were always the national "Scapegoat;" but God seeing the suffering of the Jews, had said "Enough!" He gave Israel the chance to avenge themselves on their oppressors. Jer. 30:20, Ezek. 39:10. "And they spoil their former spoilers."

The leaders of the Revolution who ruined and ravaged Russia, (Trotsky, Sverdloff, Uritsky, Zinovjew, Kameneff and many others) were all Jews. The massacre of the Royal House of Romanoff was done by the Jews. Sverdloff, together with other Jews who held the central or highest power, gave orders from Moscow for their assassination. Nashtshokin and Urovsky (who were the chief guards set over the ill-fated Royal family, and who had shot them to death and burnt their corpses) were both Jews.

In this manner Mordecai now avenged Haman for all oppression and suffering of former times. Yea! and avenged them a hundred-fold to boot in the brief space of a few years of time. It is difficult to understand the course of such vengeance, but it is the permissive will of God.

VIEWS ON THE PRESENT SOVIET GOVERNMENT

AS I fully believe that Christ was on earth in the flesh in times past, so I believe in His advent in the near future; but before His Second Coming it is said in holy prophecies of old that "antichrist will come." He will then be crowned king over the earth. For his rule and coronation there should first be prepared a foundation on which the subsequent horrible structure is to be erected. People will appear who will make all these preparations.

Closely watching the events together with the study of Holy Scripture, also observing the character of the present government in Russia, I am bound to admit that they appear as the forerunners of the antichrist; they are engaged in preparing the ground for him.

It was in 1919 that one of the members of the Tent Mission, appealing to the central authorities at Moscow for permission to proceed with the work of the Mission, received the following reply from one of the leading Commissars: "You are the worm that is gnawing at our main root, and should not be granted any permission to work, instead you should all be shot to death! As soon as we subdue our other enemies, who pursue us with shot and shell, we will then get after you!"

The spirit of antichrist had discernment!

He clearly saw in those who preached Christ's Gospel the fatal worm that would in time gnaw through the main root of that mighty tree of Satan's planting and cause it to fall. The terrible hatred and war against God and Christ are clearly manifested.

Of antichrist we read that he will give the world new laws, new ethics and a new religion, Dan. 11:37-38, 2 Thess. 2:4, Rev. 13:8-13, 15. But before these new laws can be enacted there will appear people who will destroy the old laws. The Communists are now doing this! They are leading an open, merciless war against all faith and religion; a war against the God-given law of matrimony, and the proper relation of the sexes and ages; a war that is against all that is pure, noble, virtuous and holy. Ventures are afloat for bringing in a new cult and an altogether different relationship in family life and sex problems. It is their purpose to promote immorality and vice as the ideal and exalted standard in life, and fling honor and virtue into the dust as a sin and a disgrace. All the world looks on the present Russia as a nation of immense experiments. Unfortunately the world, drunken with the spirit of antichrist, fails to see to what these experiments are leading.

The Scripture says that antichrist will "think to change times and law." Dan. 7:25. That is what the Communists are doing at the present time in Russia. They have established the five day week, which rules out Saturday and Sunday. This is done with the intention that in a few years people will lose and gradually forget their religious holidays.

About antichrist and his adherents we read that they bite their tongues in agony from the judgments, but would not repent of their evil deeds and blasphemed God. Rev. 16: 9-11. My readers have already read the incident of how one communist openly blasphemed God at Stepanovka.

We further read that all the nations of the earth will worship the antichrist, and through him Satan as well. Everyone that worships or honors God will be slain. Rev. 13: 4-8, 13, 15. In the preceding pages of this book is the confession of one person who belonged to the sect, "Worshippers of the devil."

The most cruel and merciless persecution is now prosecuted in Russia against the believers; a persecution which is a systematic pressure upon all branches of life and activity of the Christian people.

Watching (in the light of the Bible) the startling physiognomy of this government one is fully convinced that its characteristics are those of the coming antichrist. It is a fact that the spirit of antichrist instigates and leads the communistic party and government (2 Thess. 2: 1-10), and this government is preparing the ground for the advent of antichrist.

As in past days when John the Baptist went before Christ as His fore-runner, calling the people to repentance and preparing the way for Him, so now the Soviet government (destroying all that pertaineth to God and all that is holy, good and pure) seeks to bring in the new, the shocking and the satanic.

Those who stretch out their hand in friendliness to this government in our days must understand that they are stretching it out to the antichrist, and at the same time are raising it against Christ. They who extol and adhere to this government are helping to usher in the reign of the antichrist and the ultimate destruction of the world.

These are my personal views and impressions regarding the events which are fast generating in Russia these days.

Oh, may every Christian of every land raise his hands and heart in prayer to God for those of our brethren who are being tortured and persecuted for Christ's sake. Oh, may everyone echo the prayer: "Thy kingdom come, oh Lord!"



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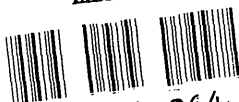
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